

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

A.—SUMMARY REPORT

BY

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(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER).

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A.—SUMMARY REPORT.

To GEORGE DRAGH, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

Grange House, Strabane,
July, 1893.

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Introduction.

Sir,
1. Having reported during the past year on the condition of the agricultural labourer in eleven Irish Unions, I have now the honour to submit some statistics and observations by way of summary or comparison of the whole.

The Unions assigned to me were Ardee, Ballymahon, Ballymena, Ballyshannon, Castleblayney, Clones, Cookstown, Downpatrick, Dromore West, Letterkenny, and Linnavady.

These districts include part of each of the Ulster counties, as well as part of four counties in Leinster and two in Connaught, and they therefore embrace every variety of soil and climate to be found in Ireland, from the rich pasture and tillage of Ardee and Downpatrick to the wild mountain ranges which occur in the Unions of Dromore West, Ballyshannon, Letterkenny, and Linnavady, and to a smaller extent in Ballymena and Cookstown. Some of these Unions, however, which include extensive mountain tracts, contain also lowlands of great fertility, and owing to this diversity, it is difficult to attempt a general classification of the soils of the various districts. Linnavady, for instance, has 21 per cent. of its area classed in the Agricultural Returns as "barren mountain" and 7·3 as bog, while some of its divisions consist of fine rich tillage land, perhaps the best in any of the districts visited; and in proportion to its cultivated area, this Union produces more green crops and grain than any other, one half being in grain and fully a fourth in green crops. Letterkenny shows a similar diversity of soil, but the fertile part is relatively smaller, the system of cultivation and the proportion of green crops and grain to the cultivated area being however much the same as in Linnavady. Ballyshannon and Dromore West have also large areas of "barren mountain" and bog, but their best lands are devoted mainly to pasture, for which they are well adapted. Ballymena and Cookstown have a smaller proportion of mountain and bog, and a larger extent of arable than the preceding districts. Both have the advantage of being centres of the linen industry, and both are among the largest flax-growing districts in Ireland. In Ballymena, the prevailing character of the soil in the lower parts of the country is gravelly loam, and clay loam, of a red colour due to the presence of iron, and of a fertile nature; the chief crops grown are potatoes, oats, flax, and hay.

The higher lying arable lands are of a heavier and colder nature, and are now more in pasture and meadow than formerly. There are many nice places belonging to the resident gentry and rich manufacturers, but there is not much timber.

Cookstown Union consists of three rather distinct districts; a flat tract along the shore of Lough Neagh, partly bog and partly alluvial, a tract of rolling land in the middle of the Union, and a hilly and mountainous country to the west.

The rolling land of the middle of the Union is a very nice country of average natural fertility, well tilled and well stocked, and having several finely wooded residential places within its bounds. The chief crops grown in this Union are oats, potatoes, turnips and other green crops, flax, and grass-seed, green crops amounting to about one-fourth of the cultivated area.

The remaining Unions do not exhibit such extreme variety of soil and climate. Ardee has no mountain and very little bog. The greater part of its area consists of good, dry, rolling land, equally suitable for tillage and pasture. Fine barley is grown and good cattle and sheep are fed, the best of the land being in pasture. The district has a large number of resident gentry, and is fairly wooded.

Ballymahon is of a somewhat similar character, but has a large extent of bog, and a greater variety of soil than Ardee. The best limestone land in this Union is nearly

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all devoted to pasture and meadow, the second-class and inferior soils only being tilled.

Castleblayney is chiefly dry, hilly, arable land, varying from medium to good quality, but rather cold, and having no supply of limestone. It is therefore generally better adapted for tillage than pasture, and it is a district of very small holdings, growing a large quantity of oats, flax, and potatoes, with a moderate proportion of other green crops.

Clones is also a hilly country, and for the most part arable, but it is better adapted for pasture than Castleblayney, having a good deal of limestone and limestone gravel, and accordingly tillage has very much declined, the best lands being now devoted to pasture and natural meadow.

Downpatrick is a rich, well-wooded, arable country, generally somewhat hilly, the soil varying from medium to light or gravelly clay. It has no bog, and very little mountain. Situated on the coast, and having several good harbours, besides the additional advantage of lying near Belfast, the local markets are exceptionally good, and this probably accounts for the fact that this district has the maximum of tillage. According to the agricultural returns for 1891, 47·5 per cent of the land of this district was under crops; it is the only considerable wheat-producing district I visited, and a large quantity of oats and potatoes is also grown, with a moderate breadth of flax.

Railway
accommoda-
tion

All the Unions visited are well circumstanced as regards railway communication except two. These are Ballymahon and Dromore West, neither of which has any railway within its bounds. The town of Ballymahon, the head of that Union, is about 12 or 13 miles from several stations on the main line and Sligo branch of the Midland and Western Railway system, but the outside parts of the Unions lie within 5 or 6 miles of stations. The Royal Canal, however, passes through the Union affording facilities for the carriage of heavy goods to and from Dublin. Dromore West is even worse off, having neither railway nor canal, and although it lies along the coast, there is no safe port for trading vessels, nor even for fishing boats.

Harbours.

Of eleven districts visited by me for the purpose of inquiry, five lie on the coast, viz., Ardee, Ballyshannon, Downpatrick, Dromore West, and Lunnavy, while Letterkenny is situated at the head of a tidal estuary, which enables small vessels to discharge a mile from the town. Of the others, the only one with good harbour accommodation, either for trading or fishing, is Downpatrick, which has several small ports from which a coasting trade is done to England and Scotland, and which afford shelter to a large fleet of fishing vessels. The consequence is that this is an important centre of fishing, and that many of the inhabitants become permanent seafaring men, while in some of the exposed districts of the west coast, such as Ballyshannon and Dromore West, where there are no harbours, and piers only of a very imperfect kind, fishing cannot be attempted except in fine weather. This subject has been referred to in some of my district reports, and I venture to mention it again, on account of the great urgency with which it was brought under my notice by many residents and especially by the clergy of the western Unions, who regard the provision of safe boat harbours and the consequent development of the sea fisheries as a matter of the most vital importance to the people of the coast.

I.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

Supply of
labour and
demand for
same.

2. In the manufacturing districts of Downpatrick and Cookstown, the supply of labour available for agricultural purposes is scarcely sufficient for the present requirements. These are both seats of the linen manufacture, and in Downpatrick there are other industries which compete with the farmer for the services of the workmen, and the proportion of tillage is also higher in these two Unions than in any other. In all the other districts of inquiry, there appears to be a sufficient supply, except during the pressure of haytime in the pastoral parts of the country and of the grain harvest in the tillage parts, and in several places there is a distinct want of regular employment in winter. This is most acute in the pastoral districts of Ballymahon, Ballyshannon, Clones, and Dromore West, and similar complaints were made in the comparatively tillage district of Castleblayney, where there are crowds of small landholders to compete for the employment with the labourers.

Effect of
inclosures
on the
supply of
labour.

3. The Unions of Downpatrick, Cookstown, and Ballymena may be regarded as typical of the entire North-eastern section of Ireland, in which the linen manufacture and other industries are carried on to such an extent as to improve materially the condition of the labourer. This district may be roughly defined as extending from

Belfast by Strangford Lough to Downpatrick, thence to Castlewells, Newry and Keady, co. Armagh, thence northward by Killylea, Dungannon, Cookstown, Moneymore, and Kilrea to Aghadowey, co. Derry, then east, taking in Ballymena, and south to Carrickfergus and Belfast. Within this area, and at a few isolated places outside of it, the linen manufacture is largely developed, and there is a tendency on the part of the best labourers to settle at the factories, because wages are higher, cottages much better, and opportunities for the advancement of their families much greater than on the farms, and the result is that the supply of labour is becoming scarce for agricultural purposes.

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4. In all the districts of inquiry, there has been of late years a decrease of population caused by emigration and by removals to large towns. During the decade 1881-91, the decrease of the general population varied from 10·4 per cent. in Letterkenny and 10·9 in Limavady to 17·5 in Castleblayney, but there was by no means a corresponding fall in the wage-earners, Limavady having lost only 8·4 per cent. of its wage-earners, while Letterkenny suffered the enormous loss of 27·6 per cent. of the same classes. Emigration has not been greatest in the districts where employment is casual and the rate of wages lowest, but appears to be affected by other more obscure causes. It is difficult to account for the fact that in the prosperous union of Downpatrick, where employment is regular and wages above the average, the fall in the wage-earning population, 1881-91, was 16·5 per cent., while in Clones, where the rate of wages is lower and winter employment precarious, there was a fall of only 9·4 per cent., and in Dromore West, where wages are lower still, the number was stationary, a serious fall in the number of cottagers being compensated by an increase of indoor servants.

Decrease of
population.

Possibly the fact that the peasantry of Downpatrick are more in contact with the outer world may have had the effect of raising their standard of living, and the near neighbourhood of Belfast gives them an opportunity of improving their position without going far from home.

5. There are few districts where any considerable volume of immigration takes place. During the course of my inquiries, I was informed that harvestmen came into the union of Ardee from Cavan and Monaghan, and at Letterkenny it was stated that numbers of men from the congested districts of West Donegal came for the harvest to this and the adjoining unions of Strabane and Londonderry. At Cookstown and Limavady, men were also said to travel from the mountainous parts of those Unions to the lowlands for harvest work, returning home in time to reap their own grain in the later districts.

Immigration

6. There is no subject upon which greater diversity of opinion is expressed than on the efficiency of the labourers, some employers speaking highly of them, while others in the same locality use the most disparaging remarks. Much of this depends on the disposition and method of working of the employer, as everyone knows that a good master generally has good men, but the weight of evidence is certainly to the effect that the agricultural labourers are not so efficient or so hard-working as formerly, the best men having emigrated or removed to towns.

Efficiency.

II.—CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT.

7. In some of the districts visited, the majority of the labourers are employed regularly round the year, and comparatively few casually, while in other districts few except indoor men have constant employment.

Regular employment in some districts only.

Where there is a preponderance of tillage, the employment is most regular, and where meadow is the principal crop, there is an excessive demand for labour in hay-time, and a corresponding slackness in winter.

There is a scarcity of winter employment in Ballymahon, Ballyshannon, Clones, Dromore West, and Castleblayney, but in the last-named district it arises, as already stated, from a somewhat different cause.

In Ardee, Ballymena, Downpatrick, Cookstown, Letterkenny, and Limavady, employment is much more regular, but there is a class of men everywhere who are casual labourers from choice, working only during the busy seasons at high wages, and idling and living poorly during the winter months. These men are generally great grumblers, and are not regarded by their neighbours as the best members of society.

In one village where they abound, and where they complained loudly of want of employment, I was surprised to see a harrier or two in nearly every house, and on the following Saturday about twenty couple of these dogs crossed the road before me

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—
Modes of
engagement.

in full cry, followed by a set of young men, who, according to the testimony of a respectable farmer, "never do a stroke of work till they cannot help it."

8. Labourers are engaged in the following different ways:—(a.) By the year, "wet and dry," with or without (but generally with) perquisites, consisting of a cottage and potato ground, often a garden, and less frequently turbarry or an allowance of fuel. (b.) Half yearly, with board and lodging. (c.) Half-yearly, out-door, boarded, and sometimes with cottage, garden, and potato ground. (d.) Casual labourers are engaged by the day or week, and on small farms are generally boarded, but the practice is not so common on large holdings.

Hours of
work.

9. The hours of work are various even in the same locality. The shortest hours of actual labour in summer were reported by a gentleman in the Letterkenney district as $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours, while in the same locality 11 hours work is done on some farms; and in the Unions of Ardee and Ballymahon the working day was reported by several employers to be 11 hours, and 10 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours by others.

The most usual working day all over the country is from 10 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours in summer, and from daylight to dark in winter, with an hour off for dinner.

Horsemen are employed about an hour longer in winter, and half an hour longer in summer, than other labourers.

Men engaged in house feeding of cattle have their work spread over about 12 hours, but they often have some leisure time between the feeding hours. This is, however, the most unpopular job with the Irish labourer, whose ambition as a lad is to get charge of a horse, and afterwards to become a ploughman, very few young men taking kindly to cattle. To this, I think, may be attributed the fact that few Irish labourers rise to the position of foremen or stewards, such places being generally filled by Scotchmen or by the sons of small farmers, who have been accustomed to the care of stock.

Women and girls, where employed, work the same hours as ordinary labourers, but there is a growing indisposition on the part of females to field labour, except on their own holdings. Large numbers of females are employed in the factories of the north-eastern districts, where their hours are regulated by the Factory Acts; but in the north-west, where domestic industries prevail, the long hours worked and the sedentary nature of the employment are calculated to have an injurious effect on the health and vigour of the population.

Sunday
work.

10. The proportion of men employed on Sunday may amount to one-fourth or one-third of the whole number of labourers, cattlemen in the winter season being occupied about half time, and horsemen for an hour or two. On large farms it is the custom for horsemen to take Sunday attendance in turn, and a similar arrangement is sometimes made for cattlemen. Where a cattleman is working single-handed, he can always get half the day when he wants it, doing the morning and evening feeds himself. Where indoor men are employed, it is a part of their bargain to take charge on alternate Sundays during church hours, the farmer or his son often taking his turn also, and in a similar way his wife or daughter takes her turn with the female servant. This usage is jealously guarded by the indoor servants, and they also frequently bargain for certain holidays, such as a quarterly fair, a church festival, or some other celebration. Half holidays on Saturday are entirely unknown, except by special leave, but a good servant is generally treated with consideration in such matters. The indoor servant generally takes a few days, and sometimes a week or two, at the term time, there being a number of supplementary hiring markets after the term.

III.—WAGES AND EARNINGS.

Rates of
wages.

11. Wages are higher in the northern and eastern than in the midland and western districts. Downpatrick heads the list as regards wages of regular men, followed by Limsavady, Ballymena, and Cookstown. Then come Ardee, Letterkenney, Castlediyney, and Clones, and last Ballymahon, Ballyshannon, and Droemore West. The valuable perquisite of potato ground is more liberally given in Limsavady than elsewhere.

From the detailed reports it will be seen that the estimated annual earnings of the agricultural labourer, including perquisites and allowances, where such are given, range from 30*l.* to 35*l.* for first-rate men in the Downpatrick district, and about the same in Limsavady, down to 20*l.* or less for ordinary labourers in Ballyshannon and Droemore West, and about 23*l.* for the small number of ploughmen employed in these districts. The current rates of weekly wages and allowances are given below.

CURRENT RATES OF WEEKLY WAGES.

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Unks.	Forster primary labourer, 7 or 8 d day	Ploughman, not and day =	General Labourer	Cottagers.	Herd or Shepherd.
Ardee	7s-8s, house, garden, and potato ground, 10-12s, without, 12s, and board.	10-12s, with house, garden, and potato ground, 14s 2s and board.	15s-16s in harvest, sometimes 20s	10-12s, with per- quisites	12s-13s, with per- quisites.
Ballymahon	8s, without perquisites.	8s, few employed	8s, 10s in harvest	8s	8s-10s, house and garden, 12s, and cow.
Ballymore	10-12s, and cottage, 10s-20s, and board and lodging.	10s-12s, 14s, 20s, and board and lodging.	10s and food in winter, 10-12s, 12s-15s and board, 15s, ranging.	10s-12s	10s-12s
Ballymacross	10s-12s, without per- quisites, 14s 2s, and board.	Few employed	10s and board, 10s and board, 10s, 12s and board, morning		Food, chiefly by cows and land.
Castletown	10s and board, 10s, with cottage and garden	10s, and cottage and gar- den.	10s and board, 10s and board, 10s, 12s and board, morning	10s, and cottage and garden	Few employed
Cavan	10s-12s and board, 10s- 12s, cottage and gar- den, 10-12s, without	10s, without perquisites few employed.	10s and board, 10s and board, 10s, 12s and board, morning	10s-12s, and per- quisites.	10s-12s and per- quisites.
Cookstown	10s, cottage, garden, and potato ground.	10s-12s, 12s, and board and lodging.	10s, 10s, in harvest	10s-12s.	10s-12s, and per- quisites.
Downpatrick	10s-12s, and board, 10s- 12s, without, 10s, and board and lodging	10s, a few higher, 10s- 12s, with board and lodging.	10s in harvest, 10s, morning	10s	10s and perquisites, Food, some sheep land, 12
Dromore West	10s-12s, without per- quisites.	10s-12s, few employed.	10s and board, 10s and board, 10s, 12s and board, morning		Food in summer, paid in cash.
Lettistown	10s-12s, with cottage and potato land.	10s, and perquisites	Harvestmen, 10s-12s, and board.	10s, and perquisites	Shepherd, 10s a year.
Lisnavea	10s-12s, with cottage and potato land	10s, with perquisites, often half an acre of potato land.	Harvest, 10s	10s-12s, some per- quisites less 10s, a year.	10s

11a. The class of professional shepherds is very limited. Here and there one is to be found in charge of a gentleman's flock, and earning from 15s. to 1l. a week. In other cases, the manager, whether steward or farmer, does the shepherd's work, assisted by a handy labourer, and on out-farms the herd has charge of cattle and sheep alike. This class of men are paid sometimes by fixed wages, such as 10s. a week, cottage, and cow's grass, sometimes by the grazing of milch cows and their calves, and occasionally a brood mare, with land for tillage, and an allowance for haymaking. The men employed in the latter way are said to be generally well off, their knowledge of stock giving them opportunities of adding to their income by dealing. Herds on small holdings are poorly paid. In Dromore district a man has a cottage and 4 acres of inferior tillage land for herding about 60 acres, working on another farm when required at 7s. 6d. a week; and in another district I met with a case where an elderly man herds a very small holding, for which the remuneration is a cottage and garden, worth about 1s. a week.

Herd and
shepherds.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

12. In the districts of inquiry assigned to me, the supply of cottages, such as they are, is sufficient in number, and a good many are unoccupied, but a large proportion of them are deficient in space, in the number of apartments, and in sanitary arrangements.

Supply of
cottages.

Good modern cottages have been built in most districts on the home farms of the resident gentry, and by some large proprietors in the villages on their estates, instances of which have been given in the separate reports, while in some other districts the landlords appear to have ignored the cottagers, relying for the labour they themselves require on the families of the small landholders, and discouraging the settlement of cottagers on the larger farms. This has led to an unequal distribution of cottages, and to the employment in such places of indoor men.

In the manufacturing districts large numbers of good cottages have been built by the factory proprietors, and these are generally well designed, and much better in their sanitary arrangements than those in the agricultural districts.

There is a larger proportion of good cottages in the Unions of Downpatrick, Ballymena, Ardee, Larnadey, and Cookstown than in the other districts visited.

Ballymahon may come next, having had a large scheme recently carried out under the Labourers Acts, but this district still has the largest number of utterly wretched cabins, unfit for habitation, particulars of which have been given in the report on the Union. As regards improved cottages, the remaining districts, I think, stand in the following order: Castlehayney, Clones, Listerkenny, Ballyshannon, and Droemore West, while as regards poor cottages it would be difficult to classify them, where so many everywhere are bad.

13. By the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1881, &c., power has been given to the board of guardians, as local authority, to provide cottages and gardens, borrowing the money on the security of the rates, but over the entire north and west of Ireland little advantage has been taken of these Acts. Up to 31st March 1892 only 78 cottages had been sanctioned in the province of Ulster, and 87 in Connaught, while 4,464 had been granted in Leinster, and 7,242 in Munster. In the district of Ardee, 123 cottages had been completed under the Labourers Acts previous to the date of my visit, and 30 were in process of erection. The average cost of these cottages, including preliminary and legal expenses, was about 115*l.*, and the sites are held chiefly by lease, at 15*s.* a year per site. With the exception of a few in the suburbs of the town, where the size of the gardens is defective, and where there is rather a superabundance of labour, these cottages are well distributed over the Union, and have half an acre of good land attached, and they are undoubtedly a great boon to those who have been so fortunate as to obtain them, the rents charged being 1*s.* 3*d.* and 1*s.* a week. A similar scheme has been carried out in the Ballymahon Union, 124 cottages having been built, and eight being in progress. These are of two classes, those containing three apartments being let at 1*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.* a year, and the second lot, with four apartments, at 1*l.* 19*s.* In all cases they have half an acre of garden, and sanitary arrangements, and they present a pleasing contrast to the miserable dilapidated mud cabins, which are still common in this district, many of which are wholly "unfit for human habitation." Previous to the introduction of the Labourers Acts, Ballymahon was by far the worst of the districts visited, as to cottage accommodation, and even after the extensive improvements which have been made, the accommodation of the majority is still poor, and that of many simply vile. There are defective cottages in every district, but none to compare for wretchedness with those of a colony of squatters near the village of Abbeysbrule, in the Ballymahon Union. These people have built on the verge of the canal towing-path a row of huts of the most miserable description, some particulars of which have been given in the district report. Most of these huts contain only one apartment, some have no window, and several have about 100 square feet, or less, of floor space.

In the Ballymena Union 12 cottages have been built at an average cost of 125*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*, including sites and all expenses, the actual building costing about 80*l.* These contain four apartments, and have each half an acre of garden, but the out-houses are defective.

In the Droemore West Union seven cottages have been built, with half an acre of garden attached.

It is difficult to account for the inaction of the local authorities in the northern and western provinces in this matter, but some of the objections urged against the Acts may be mentioned.

(a.) It is said that the sanitary law is sufficient, if enforced, to meet the difficulty, but this it has quite failed to do in the past, for the obvious reason that the compulsory vacating of a dwelling without providing another is an injustice rather than a remedy and is seldom done.

(b.) It is said by guardians that they are reluctant to harken the rates with charges for cottages in the face of the prevailing agricultural depression, and with a constantly decreasing population; and in connexion with this it is urged that the legal and other professional expenses, with the cost of sites and contractors' profits, swell the price of cottages beyond their proper value, and that economy would be promoted by granting loans to farmers who require labour, subject to the approval and control of the local authority.

(c.) In talking over this subject with a highly representative man, who knows the north well, he said, "There is no use heating about the bush, the farmers do not want "to create a new order of labourers, who would have the control of the situation," and this idea may perhaps be more commonly held than acknowledged.

Another influential man, who does not take this view, but who has strong sympathy with the labourers, and holds that they should have a permanent settlement on the land, thinks that a little gentle pressure might be put upon the guardians with that

object. He suggests that if the small grant to the Unions under the Probate Duties Act (1888) were appropriated by Parliament to the repayment of loans under the Labourers Acts, it would be a practical way of bringing about the desired result. On this I do not presume to express an opinion, but merely give the suggestion for what it is worth.

V.—GARDENS AND POTATO GROUNDS.

14. Gardens are not so general in any of the districts as might be expected, and many are so small as to be of little value. They are, I think, more common in Downpatrick, Ardee, Cookstown, and part of Limavady than in the other districts, but many ancient gardens appear to have been abolished, and potato ground substituted.

Potato grounds are given in different localities under different conditions, and in some places very liberally, half an acre being common in Limavady, while in other places a rood is given, and anything over a rood paid for. In Ardee it is the custom to manure and plant a rood for each labourer holding a house, and sometimes as much as half an acre if three of the family are working. In Downpatrick, where the rate of wages is highest, potato ground is more limited, and sometimes an allowance of two or three carts of potatoes is given instead of ground.

15. The live stock kept by the Irish labourer is generally confined to pigs and poultry, and from these a large addition to earnings is sometimes made. Cows are rarely allowed except to herds. Where cows are kept, a charge of 3*l.* is made for summer grazing, and 1*l.* for the winter. Bees are seldom kept. Live stock.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

16. Benefit societies are not known among the agricultural labourers, but are common with railway and factory workers.

VII.—TRADE UNIONS.

17. Trade Unions of agricultural labourers are not known in any of the districts visited by me, but there is one at Carrickmacross, county Monaghan, and a notice of another at Castlefin, county Donegal, has lately appeared in the local press, the avowed object of both being the improvement of the cottages, and not the regulation of wages.

VIII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

18. The general relations between employers and labourers are, with few exceptions, stated by the employers to be good. Some complaints are made as to breaches of agreement by indoor servants: that they make engagements and fail to take up the situations, and thus appears to be sometimes done for a lark during the merry-making of the hiring market, in other cases to disappoint an employer against whom some acquaintance may have a grudge. Complaints by labourers refer more to their general condition than to the relations between them and their employers, which they state to be friendly. In some localities they complain as to the length of the hours, apparently with some justice. On the other hand, they generally say that they are treated with kindness and consideration in time of sickness. General relations good.

IX.—GENERAL CONDITIONS.

19. There is great variety in the condition of the agricultural labourer in the districts visited. From all the evidence received from employers and labourers, I think the districts may be classed in the following order:—

Class.	Unions.	Condition of the Agricultural Labourer.
1.	Downpatrick Limavady Ballymena Cookstown	Good.
2.	Ardee Lettistown Castledagney Clones	Fair.
3.	Ballymacross Ballymacannon Downmore West	Poor.

The rate of wages of regular labourers does not appear as yet to be much affected by the agricultural depression, but there is an attempt nearly everywhere to work with

less help than formerly; permanent improvements are almost at a standstill, more land is being put into pasture, and in many cases fences, roads, &c. are not so tastefully kept. These causes have affected, and during the continuance of the present depression must seriously affect, the employment of the casual labourer, particularly in the poorer districts, and as there seems little prospect of improvement, his only resource will be migration to towns, or emigration.

Cottage accommodation, as already stated, is poor in many of the districts, and more or less defective in all, but permanent employment is the first requirement of the labourer.

A northern manufacturer, in referring to the inability of farmers to give employment owing to their diminished profits and the increased tendency to put the land to grass, says, "The smaller farmers (peasants) will soon be the only cultivators, as they, with their own families, do the work themselves. I do not think labourers' cottages, with allotments, any solution of the question, as what the labourer must first have is employment and wages in order to live, and until farmers are able to give that, there is no use building houses with an acre or two for families to starve on. If farmers and labourers are to be kept on the land, there must be profit off the land to keep them which at present cannot be found by the farmer."

I hope this may prove too gloomy a forecast of the future of tillage farming in Ireland, but at the best the outlook is not cheerful. Many farmers are at present holding on under difficulties; only those who have good land or exceptional advantages are prospering, and sub-letting for a crop is running down much of the land.

In estimating the condition of the Irish labourer, an English standard cannot be adopted. The Irishman does not work so hard, nor do his wants approach those of the Englishman. Even where best employed, he is much more abstemious both in food and drink, living on potatoes, flour-bread and tea, oatmeal-porridge and milk, with a small quantity of bacon, eggs, butter and salt fish, and butchers' meat only as an occasional luxury.

Under ordinary circumstances, the lot of the married labourer, until his family are able to go to service, must be one of hardship, but after some of them are employed, his condition rapidly improves.

In districts where there are domestic industries the wife and the girls from a very early age are able to help, or the children are sent out to service, and their earnings brought to the parents. The eldest often emigrates, and helps the family until they are self-supporting, and a great deal of money comes to Ireland from abroad.

20. The condition of the very small landholder does not differ materially from that of the cottager. Practically he is a labourer, but often so unfavourably located that there is little demand for his labour. The most marked examples are in the Unions of Droemore West and the Lettrim part of Ballyshannon, where districts occupied by men of this class have been scheduled by the Congested Districts Board, being valued at 1*l.* 10*s.* or under per unit of population. Employment is very limited in such places, the young of both sexes migrating to better districts as indoor servants, and some of the men going periodically to England or Scotland in search of employment.

21. There is nothing more noticeable than the small amount of pauperism existing in most of the unions, but reliance cannot be placed on poor law statistics as evidence of the relative condition of the labourers in the various districts, because the administration is comparatively liberal in some unions, and hard in others, particularly as regards outdoor relief. The following is a summary taken from the Report of the Local Government Board for 1892:—

Union.	Population.	Average number in Workhouse.	Percentage of population in Workhouse.	Number on Outdoor Relief at beginning of year.	Percentage of population on Outdoor Relief.
Ardee	16,372	178	1.06	402	2.4
Ballymahon	14,590	112	.8	232	1.6
Ballymoss	24,897	311	.63	806	1.4
Ballyshannon	22,290	117	.5	129	.68
Cashelmore	20,574	144	.5	145	.5
Clontarf	17,836	83	.46	2	—
Clontarf	27,161	104	.38	91	.33
Clontarf	43,226	165	.38	76	.17
Droemore West	15,019	59	.39	170	1.17
Lettrim	13,890	77	.55	2	—
Lisnady	25,329	107	.45	—	—

In conclusion, although the condition of the agricultural labourer in the districts visited by me cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory, it is certainly better than at any former time. The rate of wages has generally advanced, while the low price of breadstuffs and clothing enables the labourer to live better and dress better, and he has free education and free medical attendance. As matters now stand, the general opinion is that in the northern tillage districts the labourer is receiving as much as the farmer can afford to pay, having regard to the prevailing depression.

On the other hand the cottage accommodation is often defective, and sometimes very bad, and as the labourer has seldom any tie to bind him to the land he emigrates with less reluctance than the small landholder. If this emigration is to be kept in check, it will be essential to provide improved cottages and allotments, or possibly to give the better class of labourers some more direct interest in the land than they now have; and the sooner the northern Irish farmers face this important question the better, I think, will be their prospect of a supply of efficient labourers in the future.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) R. McCREA.

APPENDIX.

TABLE L.—Showing the NUMBER and SIZE of HOLDINGS. Extracted from TABLE III., AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1891.

Union	Holdings not exceeding								Above 500 acres	Total number of holdings	Total acreage of Union	Average acreage of holdings
	1 acre	5 acres	15 acres	30 acres	50 acres	100 acres	200 acres	500 acres				
Ards	538	296	329	472	292	227	125	74	10	3,602	96,918	27
Ballynabon	980	343	694	787	455	344	107	45	4	3,901	106,144	27.5
Ballynass	234	276	1,501	1,642	612	372	100	60	9	3,480	161,163	29.3
Ballyvaughan	184	399	1,253	1,331	640	345	105	40	4	4,179	132,010	31.7
Carrickbeg	411	750	9,608	1,348	433	137	17	1	—	3,895	94,300	17
Clones	209	345	1,195	992	400	157	30	4	1	3,493	79,502	22.8
Co. Wick	681	383	1,799	1,353	468	197	46	9	7	3,404	95,730	19
Downpatrick	1,042	654	1,747	1,547	820	494	106	25	5	6,457	147,400	22.8
Downpatrick West	116	173	879	775	358	155	71	23	19	2,681	97,960	27.6
Letterkenny	158	136	347	607	600	343	108	45	12	2,170	141,347	46.6
Lisnardsy	344	190	795	528	584	481	149	33	19	3,214	152,710	47.2

TABLE II.—Showing the proportion per cent. under CROPS (including MEADOW and CLOVER), GRASS, FALLOW, WOODS and PLANTATIONS, TURF BOG, MARSH, BARREN MOUNTAIN LAND, and WATER, ROADS, and FENCES in 1891.

Union	Crops, including Meadow and Clover	Grass	Fallow	Woods and Plantations	Turf Bog	Marsh	Barren Mountain	Water, Roads, Fences, &c.
Ards	35.7	56.3	2	1.9	0	0	—	4.5
Ballynabon	36.1	37.2	1	1.3	11.0	1.7	2	4.4
Ballynass	32.5	50.5	1	1	4.7	1.6	6.6	3.9
Ballyvaughan	39.4	59.8	1	0	5.2	0	5.7	4.7
Carrickbeg	39.2	50.1	2	8	2.3	1	1.0	3.3
Clones	32.7	56.0	2	1	8.9	0	0	6.2
Co. Wick	42.8	50.5	1	1.3	7.2	0	4.6	4.3
Downpatrick	47.5	60.3	1	2.1	1	0	3.1	5.3
Downpatrick West	33.3	63.7	—	0.5	11.3	6.0	22.4	3.4
Letterkenny	22.0	68.8	1	0	6.5	1.5	15.7	4.9
Lisnardsy	37.4	38.2	1	0	7.8	0	10.0	4.6

TABLE III.—EXTRACTED FROM AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, showing the EXTENT under CROPS in 1891, and the VALUATION and POPULATION, 1891.

Union	Cereals, Beans, and Potatoes					Green Crops				Flax	Hay			Total under Crops	Value, 1891	Population 1891
	Wheat	Oats	Barley	Other Cereals	Potatoes	Total	Turnips	Other Green Crops	Total		Green and mangel	Green Hay	Green Potatoes			
Arden	Arden 624	Arden 3,902	Arden 4,711	Arden 90	Arden 14,210	Arden 23,937	Arden 3,207	Arden 144	Arden 7,261	Arden 1	Arden 8,558	Arden 8,806	Arden 29,327	Arden 54,327	Arden 14,772	Arden 14,772
Ballynashon	38	4,207	8	74	4,008	2,968	1,048	308	8,002	—	2,002	10,002	10,002	10,002	10,002	10,002
Ballynashon	125	14,008	1	10	14,024	14,024	944	20	23,968	8,008	14,008	8,008	14,008	14,008	14,008	14,008
Ballynashon	80	5,270	8	10	5,288	4,108	748	748	5,556	10	5,566	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000
Castledown	8	14,008	8	7	14,023	7,008	2,008	550	9,573	2,008	6,008	5,008	11,008	11,008	11,008	11,008
Clonsilla	104	4,008	8	80	4,096	5,008	748	402	6,158	170	5,008	5,008	5,008	5,008	5,008	5,008
Clonsilla	600	12,008	10	222	12,240	7,008	2,008	300	10,008	2,008	8,008	8,008	8,008	8,008	8,008	8,008
Donpatrick	1,204	10,008	40	301	10,549	10,549	6,008	1,112	11,661	2,008	13,669	2,008	15,677	15,677	15,677	15,677
Donpatrick West	100	4,008	80	01	4,089	5,008	1,008	807	6,815	8	1,008	5,008	10,008	10,008	10,008	10,008
Letterkenny	—	17,008	8	2	17,018	2,008	2,008	502	4,518	1,114	2,008	2,008	2,008	2,008	2,008	2,008
Letterkenny	50	10,008	405	605	11,078	4,008	4,008	878	11,008	1,442	4,508	1,008	12,008	12,008	12,008	12,008

TABLE IV.—SHOWING THE DECREASE OF POPULATION and the DECREASE OF WAGE-EARNERS (including GENERAL LABOURERS), 1881-1891.

Union	Population, 1881	Population, 1891	Decrease per cent.	Wage-earners (over 20 years), 1881	Wage-earners over 20 in 1891	Decrease per cent.	Acres of Crop per Wage-earner
Arden	10,796	10,772	15.2	5,568	1,018	25.0	18
Ballynashon	27,286	14,440	14.7	1,618	1,398	19.0	16
Ballynashon	62,784	38,897	13.1	2,804	2,000	30.0	16
Ballynashon	38,264	29,280	12.1	1,274	907	33.0	25
Castledown	39,838	28,274	17.5	2,062	1,547	25.0	24
Clonsilla	30,888	27,836	14.0	1,891	1,890	8.4	19
Clonsilla	30,830	27,880	12.2	1,878	1,886	12.8	24
Donpatrick	48,139	42,238	12.0	4,008	3,364	16.5	21
Donpatrick West	17,248	15,073	13.4	642	665	Stationary	19
Letterkenny	15,073	13,858	10.4	1,215	879	27.6	22
Letterkenny	20,251	20,268	1.0	2,008	2,008	0.0	19

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

M R. R. M C C R E A
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

ON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF COOKSTOWN
(CO. TYRONE).

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Abstract of Returns from seven Employers

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEORGE DRAGG, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour

George House, Slieveonea,
September 5, 1899.
Sir, 1. In pursuance of instructions received, I have the honour to forward a short report upon the supply of labour, and the condition of the agricultural labourer in the union of Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, Ireland.

2. Having received general instructions from Mr. Little, whom I met in Dublin on 1st July, I attended on the 16th July at the County Tyrone Assizes, where I had an interview with three grand jurors, two of whom reside in the Cookstown Union, and the third upon its border. These gentlemen recommended that a meeting should be held at Cookstown after the rising of the board of guardians on the 23rd of July, and I accordingly arranged to open the inquiry at that time.

Meanwhile, I posted circulars to members of the board of guardians, to the local clergy and magistrates, and to the newspapers appointed to sit at preliminary sessions, asking them to attend on the date mentioned. On the 26th July I proceeded to Cookstown, and at once put myself in communication with employers and labourers, as well as with the acting clerk of the union.

On the 21st I attended the fair of Moyrathmore, on the verge of the union, where I met a number of employers, and on the 22nd I drove to Tullahoge, Stewartstown, and other places, calling on several resident gentlemen and farmers, who suggested that a meeting should be held at Stewartstown on or about 29th.

3. In accordance with these arrangements I held a meeting at the court-house, Cookstown, on the 23rd July, which was attended by 15 persons; one a deputy-magistrate, two others magistrates, one clergyman of the Presbyterian church, two elected guardians, and eight farmers. No labourer attended this meeting, although I had men many, and invited them to come. After a lengthened conversation, during which I explained the objects of the inquiry, farms (No. 3) were distributed to those who had not already received them, and the meeting was adjourned to Friday (29th) at Stewartstown.

I was obliged to leave the union on 25th and 26th, returning on 27th. During the two days preceding the Stewartstown meeting I saw a large number of labourers as they proceeded to their work in the morning, and during the day I visited a number of gentlemen, among others, Sir Nathaniel Staples, Bart., whom I found to be a large employer of agricultural labour, and whose agent has sent in a return, which is appended.

On the 28th I held a meeting at Stewartstown, which was attended by Mr. HUNT CHAMBER, an estate agent and large farmer, by one other magistrate, one solicitor, and a few farmers living in the village.

As at Cookstown, no labourers attended, although I had talked to numbers, and invited them to come or to send deputies. None of the local clergy attended the meeting, and I came to the conclusion to hold no more meetings in this union, as the time spent in organizing and attending them would probably be better employed in moving about among the farmers and labourers and conversing with them, a course which I pursued during my subsequent stay in the union.

4. The union of Cookstown contains, according to the Ordnance Survey, 56,720 acres, the valuation of which is returned at 60,538*l.*, and the population, making allowance for decrease, is now about 30,000. It is, in the main, an agricultural union, 81*1*/₂ per cent. of its area being returned as agricultural land, and 41*3*/₄ per cent. as arable crops requiring manual labour. The proportion of the total number of males over 15 years of age included in the agricultural class is 79 per cent., and the wage earners in agriculture

Cabarets, shepherds, and indoor farm servants) as 148 per cent. This very small proportion of wage earners is due to the fact that many of the holdings from their small size, do not employ outside labour, the family being sufficient for the work.

5. The union varies considerably in its character, extending from a level of about 50 feet on the shore of Lough Neagh to a very high altitude in the Murterbury mountains range, where it is bounded by a portion of the Omeagh Union, formerly included in the small union of Gortin.

Roughly speaking, there are three classes of country in the union, divided by irregular lines from north to south—1st. A belt of thin low-lying land to the east; 2nd. The rolling land in the middle; and 3rd. The mountainous country to the west.

5 (a). The flat district next Lough Neagh is occupied chiefly by small landholders, who, in the majority of cases, till their farms with the assistance of their families, and who frequently supplement their small earnings by fishing on the lake for pike, an industry analogous to herring fishing on the coast. At other seasons eels and trout are caught for, and while some industrious men make a good living by fishing, I am inclined to the opinion that the profits derived from the fishery are in many cases fully dissipated by the neglect of tillage which it entails.

There are few labourers in this part of the union.

5 (b). The second district comprises the rolling land in the middle of the union, which is of fair agricultural quality, well tilled and well stocked, and having within its bounds several fine residential places, a number of factories for the spinning and weaving of linen, and farms of much larger size than the western or eastern divisions, and therefore requiring much more labour.

5 (c). The third or western division of the union is of a mountainous character, and is peopled by a hardy, industrious peasantry, who have retained from health large tracts of the hills, and who live a rough, but fairly comfortable and contented life. Their holdings are of small valuation in proportion to their area; peat fuel is abundant, and some employment is obtained by saving peat for persons at a distance.

There are but few labourers in this district; the small tenants spend their spare time in reclaiming by spade labour and fencing additional patches of moor. Many of the young men and women emigrate to the colonies and the United States; a few come to the lowlands for harvest work, returning home in time for their own later harvest; and some are employed as indoor farm servants in the lowlands.

Formerly the population of this, and to some extent of other, parts of the union migrated to England and Scotland in search of employment. This is now rare, but some young men, instead of emigrating, find settlements in the manufacturing centres of England and Scotland.

1.—SOURCE OF LABOUR.

6. In the central part of the union the supply of labour is rather limited. Out of seven returns which I have appended to this report, five say the supply is insufficient, while two say it is sufficient in their neighbourhood, and many others with whom I conferred informed me that they found it difficult for some years past to hay and harvest time to get a sufficiency of labour. Both the gentlemen who state the supply to be sufficient are proprietors who have a large amount of labour from their own tenants, so that their statements can scarcely be set against the united testimony of the large number, who consider the supply of labour insufficient for the present requirements.

7. Every one in the union agrees that the supply of labour has steadily decreased during the past 15 years. Mr. Crawford estimates the decrease at 20 per cent.,

and Mr. Leaper at as much as 40 per cent. in his neighbourhood.

This is objected to emigration, which goes on steadily.

8. There is no immigration at any season of the year.

9. Those who have expressed an opinion as to the efficiency of the labourers of the union are agreed that they are not so efficient as in former times.

Mr. Crawford, a very thoughtful farmer, says that old men only can be employed at several particular or handy jobs, which he enumerates. This may be accounted for by the emigration of the best of the young men, who have lived in the houses of the farmers, where they are usually better treated than the casual labourer (who moves from farm to farm), and where they can readily save in a short time money for passage and outfit.

II.—CUSTOMS OR ENTAILMENT.

10. In the central division of the union, which may be regarded as the home of the agricultural labourer, employment is regular and continuous, every man, woman, and young person able to do a fair day's work being employed in summer, and all the men and boys and most of the women in winter. In the neighbourhood of the manufacturing town of Cookstown, as well as near the villages of Cough and Coal Island, the manufacturer competes with the farmer for the available labour, and families of agricultural labourers often move into the villages or their suburbs, and become mill hands. This has tended not only to lessen the supply of agricultural labour, but in some degree to impair its efficiency, as the best men and those with strong families go to the mills.

As observed in a previous paragraph, the conditions in the eastern and western parts of the union are very different from those prevailing in the central district, holdings being of smaller size, and the work generally done by members of the family.

The class of labourers is therefore scarce in the mountainous part of the union, but there are some few squatters, who hang on to the holdings where they were born or where they have married.

They get a place to build a cabin, or an old one to repair; a bit of land from some relative and a run as the mountain for a cow, for which they pay in money or labour, but the class is dying out, sub-letting being discouraged, on all well managed properties, by the landlord; and the tenant being forced into a similar policy by the provisions of the Land Acts* and Franchise Act†.

In a previous paragraph on the characteristics of the union, some observations on the lake shore district have been made which explain the condition of the people on the narrow flat belt adjoining the lake.

11. Young men are engaged for a term of six months, living in the employer's house, and on the smaller holdings are regarded almost as members of the family. The term times are May and November, and no notice is required to terminate this engagement. The agreements are verbal, and are made at half-yearly hiring markets, which are a sort of holiday in the entire country where the custom of engagements prevails. A steady young man often stays for years in the same employment, until he marries or emigrates.

Men with families are also sometimes engaged in a similar way, but more frequently as outdoor labourers, renting a cottage either from their employer or from a landlord in an adjoining village, and employed in some instances at regular weekly wages on the tenant farm, or if casual labourers merely by the week or day, as they work.

12. The hours of labour vary a little in different districts of the union. Carters, ploughmen, and cattle-men are expected to work from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., both in winter and summer (see Mr. Crawford's return).

Ordinary labourers on some farms work in summer from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with two hours for meals, on other farms, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with one hour for dinner, and in winter from daylight till dark, with an hour for dinner and sometimes time for a second breakfast or tea, which is brought to them.

* Under the Land Act a tenant who has sold any portion of his holding may be excluded from the benefit of the Act on the ground that he is not in occupation of the whole holding. If he has sold more than half he can only retain the sub-tenant who occupies the status of a sub-tenant, and is not a tenant.

† A "tenant's remedy" may be sought at the "court" but by sub-letting, and compelled to return to a "householder."

Women work the same hours as ordinary labourers on the farms where they are employed, and young people during the hay and straw season, and in the grain harvest, when employed, work the same hours.

13. The extreme limit of time worked, is given by Mr. Crawford as 10½ hours, for carters, ploughmen, and cattle-men.

Other employers and labourers state that the hours of labour are in summer, 10 hours, including the time spent in going from the yard to the fields, but not the time spent in returning.

In winter, the ordinary labourer works from daylight to dark; men in charge of horses and cattle from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with two hours for meals, or from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with one hour for dinner.

I am inclined to regard Mr. Crawford's statement as the more exact with regard to the limits of time worked by horse and cattle-men, while their normal hours of labour may be reduced in winter, when field work is stopped at an early hour, and the ploughmen are discharged till stable time, and the cattle-men until the hour for giving the evening feed.

14. There is no work on Sunday except the necessary attendance on horses and cattle, which in summer is comparatively slight, being confined to the feeding and watering of horses and the milking of cattle.

In winter cattle-men are fully employed on Sunday, but an arrangement is sometimes made by which assistance is given on Saturday by the preparation of food, or on Sunday by a member of employer's or of labourer's family staying at home so as to permit the cattle-men to go to services on alternate Sundays.

A similar custom exists with regard to the women servants in farmers' houses.

The number of labourers employed on Sunday is estimated by Mr. Crawford as two out of every five, and in his case this is doubtless correct, but I have reason to believe that it is in excess of the proportionate number employed on Sunday over the union generally.

III.—WAGES AND EARNINGS.

15. The wages of the agricultural labourer in this union vary as he approaches to or recedes from the manufacturing centre of Cookstown, and the smaller manufacturing villages of Cough and Coal Island.

Ordinary skilled labourers lived in a farmer's house, well lodged and heated, get 26s. a year, equal according to Mr. Crawford to 25s. Ploughmen, 18s. and board, equivalent, according to the same authority to 27s. I would be inclined to estimate the board and lodging of a labourer in a farmhouse at 12s. which would bring up the earnings of the ordinary skilled labourer to 38s. a year, and those of the ploughman and good cattle-man to 30s., or about 10s. 6d. and 11s. 6d. a week respectively. This is rather in excess of the returns made by some farmers, and is higher than that given by—

16. James McEller, a labourer, who said, "I get 9s. a week round the year, and others are worse off. I pay 1s. a week for a house in the village, and 1d. per ridge of 14 square yards for potato ground." This amounts to 29s. 10s. per year.

James Martin, who holds 6 acres and a house from a farmer, says, "I pay 6s. rent. I work where I please. A steady labourer gets 2s. a week all the year. Young men hired in farmers' houses get 16s. a year and are well lodged and fed. Wages of casual labourers vary according to the season and their ability; they get 1s. 6d. a day in haytime and harvest, and then 'dimes'."

Midgley, earlier to a small miller, said, "I get 5s. a week and am lodged and fed in my master's house. I cannot get equal to 12s. a week, as I am well fed and well lodged."

This man informed me that, having recently married, he intended leaving, as he could do better. He has remained in his present place owing to the exceptional comfort and the kindness of his employer.

A hand-loom weaver, who works in his own house, said he got 10s. for weaving 60 yards of larra baid, bedclothes, which he could easily do in a week, and do some casual job on his bit of land. This industry is rapidly dying out, and the weavers moving into the neighbourhood of the factories.

17. A number of women having farms told me they got 10s. a day at that job; when fax pulling comes on

THE
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIAL
LABOURERS' UNION.

Months of
Time.

Summer
work.

Winter-work
on Sunday.

Wages and
earnings.

Maximum
wages.

Wages of
hand-loom
weavers.

Wages of
women.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

Testify of
Mr. N. S. S. S.
p. 10, 11, 12.

Second visit
to Mr. N. S. S.
p. 13.

Summary of
evidence.

Peasantry.

Peasantry
and labour.

Peasantry.

Other em-
ployment
than agri-
cultural.

Peasantry.

Peasantry.

Peasantry
and labour.

Peasantry
and labour.

Peasantry
and labour.

Peasantry.

they get 15d. to 18d., and in the grain harvest is 8d. to 12s.

These wages are at a distance from any factory, so do all these whose statements I have given, and hence their regular wages, outside of harvest work, is somewhat lower than that prevailing in the neighbourhood of factories, where there is more competition for labour.

Sir Nathaniel Stogies, Bart., who employs 38 persons (see Mr. Magill's return) pays men 7s. a week and women 5s. There are eight excellent houses on the place; the other labourers are small landholders or their sons, who live near to the demesne. The men in the yard, stables, and garden, who live on the place, get milk and fuel equal to 3s. or 2s. 6d. a week. A similar rate of wages is current on other large places, but few give so much employment, the tendency of late years having been to put demesne and home farms into pasture.

By the invitation of Sir N. Stogies I re-visited his place, to meet his agent, who was absent at my first visit. I also talked to some of the labourers between whom and their employer the best relations exist; the houses are kept in first rate order, constant employment is given, and kind and considerate treatment in sickness and old age, the place altogether affording a good illustration of the benefits which a thoughtful resident proprietor can confer upon the people on his estate.

It may, I think, be fairly concluded that the wages of agricultural labourers range in this union from 5s. to 12s. 6d. a week according to efficiency and their situation with regard to factories, or from 8s. to 10s. a year.

20. There is very little piece-work done, only one farmer, Mr. Crawford, taking any notice of it. He says, duns are opened by piece-work, the price varying according to the nature of the subject.

21. In laytime and harvest the casual labourer obtains a higher rate of wages according to the demand, ranging up to 12s. a week, according to Mr. Adair's and Mr. Chamber's returns.

22. The only privilege commonly given by the farmer is a piece of ground for planting potatoes as stated under the head of "Gardens, allotments, &c." Some large proprietors (see Mr. Magill's return) give fuel and milk, but it is quite exceptional. Other allowances and payments in kind, so far as I could discover, are unknown.

23. A number of men are employed during the winter and spring months in fax-cutting, which is carried on in small mills on the lighter streams through the union, and a somewhat larger number of women are employed in "strawing" and rolling the fax straw to prepare it for the scutching process.

Scutching is a highly skilled trade, at which men are employed by piece-work, and as these mills are not under the Factory Acts, they often work very long hours. Mr. Leaper, who is well acquainted with the details of the fax trade, being managing director of a spinning mill, estimates the average earnings of a scutcher at 12s. a week, but in the early part of the season, or when the price of the fax is rising, they sometimes make much more.

The period of their employment fluctuates from about four to about eight months, and they are casual labourers during the remainder of the year, when not bound to work to the mill owner on his farm.

24. The few quarries in the union appear to work at the quarries all the year, and, except when thrown out of employment for a time, do not work on farms.

Extensive quarries, formerly worked, are now being re-opened, and will afford valuable employment.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

25. The supply of cottages is sufficient as regards numbers, but has decreased as the population became thinned by emigration or by removal from the strictly agricultural districts to the mills.

26. The cottage in which the regular agricultural labourer lives is generally situated on the farm on which he works, that of the casual labourer often in a village near to which he finds employment.

27. The condition of the cottages varies, but is for the most part fairly good.

28. They are generally built of stone and lime, and in the country the older cottages are thatched with straw. In the towns and villages thatched houses are being replaced by slated houses, and the modern cottages in the country districts are all slated.

29. The accommodation varies from two to three apartments, and in the villages four sometimes. Mr. Leaper says, some cottages have only one apartment, but I did not notice any such case while in the union, and I think they must be very rare, probably confined to bog holdings, where the poor often squat.

30. The usual form of the cottages is a plain house, 18 to 20 feet long by 14 or 16 wide, half of which is divided as a kitchen, the remaining half, in the rarer houses, constitutes the second apartment, but in other cases is divided into two small rooms, which would measure about 10 feet by 8 feet, or otherwise 9 feet by 7 feet, or even less.

In some cases the bedroom end is lofted, and forms a fourth apartment, approached by a ladder.

31. Ventilation, in the majority of cases, is very defective; windows often are made fast, but this state of things is either unimproved by the habit of the Irish peasantry of keeping the upper leaf of the door almost constantly open during the day.

32. The drainage is generally nil, but in low-lying situations an open drain is sometimes found. In some backward localities a cess-pit is sometimes seen dangerously near to the cottage door, but generally the sanitary laws appear to have been put in force. The refuse from the house is usually just upon a heap and mixed with bog staff or clay to provide a compost for the garden or potato patch.

As to the cottages in the neighbourhood Mr. Crawford says: "The supply of cottages, such as they are, is equal to the demand. As compared with the past there is scarcely any improvement, but they are favourably situated in most cases in respect to distance from work, and, with the exception of one village, are on the farms."

"In some cases they are to be repaired, but on the whole it is fair. They are usually built of stone, with thatched roof of straw; with limited accommodation, the usual number of rooms being two; very small, bad ventilation, as drainage, and precarious water supply, with no out-offices."

In the towns and villages the cottages are of a better class, containing generally of three or four rooms, and their sanitary condition is also better than in the country.

33. There is no abundant supply of good water over the union generally.

34. The labourers' cottages extend only to a pig-gery, and sometimes a shelter for swine. In other cases the hens are permitted to roost in the cottages. In the country districts private law and law between, in the villages they are more general.

35. In the towns and villages the cottages are held directly from the lord of the soil or from a middle landlord who holds a long lease. In the country they are generally held from the farmer, who builds them, as he does the other farmhouses and offices, which are quite exceptional in the union, and in Union generally, for the owner to erect buildings for the tenant or the labourer, except of course, on the home farm, which he himself occupies. There are no cottages owned by labourers, but in some cases small farmers, who own their own cottages, work as casual labourers when not fully employed on their own holdings.

36. Where the labourer lives in a cottage on the farm where he works, he is generally charged weekly rent, which enables the farmer to determine the tenancy by a week's notice in the event of the labourer leaving his employment.

In some of the villages cottages and gardens are held direct from the estate owner, and in the neighbourhood of the factories excellent cottages with modern appliances have been built for the operatives. These are let by the week.

37. The usual rent for an agricultural labourer's cottage and small garden is, in the country districts, 1s. a week, sometimes a "bare house," or cottage without a garden is obtained for 9d. a week, and a house with a very good garden may bring 1s. 6d.

In the villages rents range from a minimum of 1s. a week up to 2s. 6d. or 3s., according to accommodation and to the size of garden.

(A) The rules are all paid by landlord, where the valuation is under 4l., even where the letting is annual, except there is a special agreement.

E.-L.
COTTAGE-
TOWN
—
Accommodation and
number of
rooms.
Number of
rooms and
plot.

Ventilation.

Drainage.

Water supply.

Outbuildings.

Greenhouses and hothouses.

Condition of tenancy.

Rents.

B.-1.
Cattle
cows.

Gardens, all
lotments, &c.
cultivated.

V.—GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS

35. The cottages generally have gardens of small size attached, in some places only a few pecks, in others varying from half a rood to half an acre, beyond which they do not extend, holdings over half an acre being regarded as agricultural tenements under the Land Acts. The gardens are well cultivated, with some exceptions, potatoes and cabbage are the chief crops grown, sometimes other vegetables are added, and in many cases forests are seen, generally of large showy kinds.

37. Notes.

38. These are generally given free by the farmer to the labourer who resides on the farm, see statements of Mr. Crawford, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Leeper. The labourer residing in a village pays the farmer for his potato ground, see statement of James Mallins (note), and those of Mr. Chambers and Mr. Adams, appended to report.

Cow pas-
tures.

39. It is very exceptional for a labourer in this union to keep a cow, and there are no cow pastures.

Live stock.

40. The live stock of the labourer in some localities is confined to fowls, in others pigs are kept. Bees are rare.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES AND TRADE UNIONS.

Benefit
societies and
trade
unions.

41. Benefit societies and trade unions of agricultural labourers are entirely unknown in this union.

VII.—GENERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE.

General
relations.

42. The general relations between employers and employed appear to be of a friendly description; engagements are in general faithfully observed by both parties, and consequently disputes between employers and labourers are of rare occurrence.

VIII.—GENERAL CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

43. The condition of the agricultural labourer in this union compares favourably with many other districts. All employers and labourers concur in the opinion that it has greatly improved during the past 15 years, inasmuch as the rate of wages has increased, that employment is more regular and continuous, and that the price of the necessaries, and many of the comforts and luxuries, has very materially decreased. Some employers say that the condition of the labourer is likely still further to improve, but it is doubtful whether the things named could bear any further strain on his diminished earnings, and it is probable that any rise of wages will be controlled by the tendency to turn tillage land into pasture.

The condition of the labourer's cottages is not altogether satisfactory, and deserves the careful consideration of all persons of influence. It seems to be the only disability of which the labourer in this union can complain, but the agricultural labourer is generally satisfied with any accommodation, however poor, provided he is well and constantly employed. It is to be noticed that there is a strong disinclination on the part of the ratepayers in this and other Ulster unions, to incur responsibility for money borrowed for cottage building, either personally or under the provisions of the Labourers (Ireland) Acts.

44. Mr. Crawford says, "The condition of the agricultural labourer is, on the whole, very good," with the exception of his house. Provide him with a fair house and about a rood of ground, which he can call his own, and no man to disturb him, and you place him in a position of independence and comfort fully equal to his employer, indeed in a great many instances much better. He has constant and regular employment for himself and his family, education for his children, and not too long hours of labour, with good pay. In harvest and haytime women can earn 6s. per week, and I know some families whose average weekly earnings amount to 50s. per week."

Mr. Leeper, J.P., says, "The general condition of the agricultural labourer has vastly improved during the past 15 years, the decadence of hand-loom weaving having driven large numbers into the towns, and so the factories in the district, where the women and girls in the families always find employment. The labour in the country has become scarce and dear, and the employment continuous; work is always to be had, and wages are likely to rise still further. The condition of the dwellings might be much improved, the practice of having the manure pit close to and in front of the door is almost universal, if the sanitary of the sanitary inspectors were enforced, it would vastly improve matters in this respect." He also says, "The present state of the law operates adversely to the labourer, as the farmer cannot let a larger quantity of ground than half an acre without the labourer acquiring the status of a judicial tenant. I would strongly advocate an alteration of the law which would obviate this."

It may be suggested that the adoption of either of these schemes would tend to impair the efficiency of the labourer; in the former case, by rendering him independent of his employer, and in the latter by employing too much of his time on his own holding; but, however that may be, there can be no doubt that the building of comfortable cottages, with adequate provision for the separation of the sexes, and with suitable sanitary arrangements, is a matter of the highest importance to the welfare of the labourer, and to the supply of labour in the near future.

The action which the Ulster ratepayers have hitherto shown to the Labourers (Ireland) Acts would probably be overcome by an amending Act, lowering the rate of interest on loans for the building of cottages, and strengthening the control over the expenditure, which in some Irish unions has been most extravagant, and altogether out of proportion to the benefits received by the labourer.

45. I have appended to this report an abstract from some returns sent in by gentlemen who are employers of labour in the union, and well acquainted with its requirements. From these returns I have derived much assistance in forming my opinion as to the condition of the labourer, and, making allowance for the somewhat different circumstances of various parts of the union, I have found them to agree closely with the information communicated verbally by labourers and others with whom I met and conversed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. McCREA,
Assistant Commissioner.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.
NOTES
FURNISHED
BY MR.
CRAWFORD
AND MR.
LEEPER.

Appendix

APPENDIX.
Cuckoo's Nest.

ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE FROM SEVEN EMPLOYERS.

1.	Supply of labour	1.	Mr. W. Chas. A. J.P., Buckingham, 1811.	2.	Mr. W. R. Chas. A. J.P., 1811.	3.	Mr. James Hagg.	4.	Mr. Hamilton Hall, 1811.	5.	W. Lough, Esq., J.P., 1811.	6.	J. S. Magill, Esq., J.P., 1811.						
2.	Conditions of employment	1.	Good hands have regular employment, outside by the week, inside by six months. Season, 6.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m., winter, 7.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m., two hours for meals, 10 hours' work. One man mending and evening. 10 hours' work. Sunday, one out of five.	2.	Not sufficient, especially in hay-time and harvest, decrease 30 per cent. Not sufficient. One man has to be employed for particular work, such as mowing, ploughing, harrowing, binding, stacking, &c.	3.	Employment regular and continuous. Some level by six months with best wages, others by the week. Shearers all year, 6.0 a.m. to 7.0 p.m., two hours for meals. Ordinary labourers and women, 7.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m., one hour for dinner, 10 hours' work. Sunday, one out of five.	4.	Not enough, especially in hay season and harvest. Decrease for 15 years. Employment regular from March to June. Not so good.	5.	Employment regular and continuous by six months. 6.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m., two hours for meals, including mowing and shearing. On Sunday only stockmen.	6.	Employment regular and continuous by six months. 6.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m., two hours for meals, and sometimes from 6.0 a.m. to 7.0 p.m. with the usual meal hours.	7.	Employment regular. Possibly part-time. 7.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. with an hour for dinner.	8.	Employment regular. Possibly part-time. 7.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. with an hour for dinner.	9.	Employment regular. Possibly part-time. 7.0 a.m. to 4.0 p.m. with an hour for dinner.
3.	Wages and earnings	1.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	2.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	3.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	4.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	5.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	6.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	7.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	8.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.	9.	Man, 12s. to 15s. a week, women, 8s. 6d. to 10s. a week. Hay and harvest 10s. to 12s. a week. Not much piece-work.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

IRELAND.

REPORT

BY

M R. R. MCCREA

(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

BALLYSHANNON UNION

(COUNTIES OF DONEGAL, FERMANAGH, AND LEITRIM).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEORGE DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

Grange House, Strabane,
Oct. 1892.

SIR,
(1.) I have the honour to submit the following short report on the union of Ballyshannon, situated in the counties of Donegal, Fermanagh and Leitrim.

(2.) Before proceeding to Ballyshannon I communicated with the clerk of the union, from whom I obtained a list of the guardians, and of a number of the highest ratepayers, and to these gentlemen, as well as to the local clergy and magistrates, I sent a circular concerning a meeting for the 30th of August. I went to Ballyshannon on the 15th August, remaining till the 17th, interviewing everyone I could meet, including the proprietors of the two local papers, who inserted paragraphs in their issue of the 19th, urging all persons in the union to come forward and assist in the inquiry. At the meeting of the 30th August there were present, the incumbent of the parish, two magistrates, one merchant, one solicitor, and eight farmers. After a long conversation farms No. 3 were distributed, and the gentlemen present promised to send in returns, and to facilitate my inquiries in every way they could. Two of these gentlemen afterwards sent me returns and I obtained a few others from employers of labour, in other parts of the union, but many of the resident gentlemen with whom I met, and who promised assistance, entirely failed to fulfil their promise. There were no labourers present at this first meeting.

(3.) Afterwards, by arrangement with Reverend Canon McKenna, the Roman Catholic clergyman of Ballyshannon, I held two evening meetings, at which a large number attended, but I was unable to determine what proportion were actual labourers, the majority doubting being small landholders.

(4.) The union of Ballyshannon is situated in the South-western part of Donegal, and the adjoining parts of Fermanagh and Leitrim.

It has a frontage to the sea of 12 or 13 miles, and includes in its area part of Lower Lough Erne, by which and by the River Erne, the union is intersected. It also includes another large lake, Lough Melvin, which separates Fermanagh and Leitrim and discharges the drainage of a considerable district by the river Bannadriga.

(5.) Along the entire frontage, and generally over the union, the mountain limestone formation prevails, but to the eastward of Lough Melvin it disappears, and is replaced, or rather covered by the millstone grit, which occupies a high ridge in the Fermanagh or eastern end of the union, replaced again by the limestone in the lower lying country round Churchhill, in the extreme eastern part of the union.

In the northern part a spur of the Schistose formation, which prevails in the middle of Donegal, comes in, but the union lies mainly on the limestone.

The character of the soil varies from excellent limestone land, capable of feeding good store cattle and sheep, to a very low quality of mountain soil. Much of the moderate and inferior part shows traces of burning, a system which formerly was practised extensively in this and other parts of the West of Ireland, and which so exhausted the productive power of the soil that no restorative tillage can bring it up to its original fertility.

(6.) The Ballyshannon Union has an area of 132,810 acres, the poor law valuation is 34,522, the population in 1881 was 24,204, which had decreased in 1891 to 23,296, or a decrease of 10 per cent in the decade.

In 1861 the population of the union was 28,941, so that in the past thirty years the decrease has been 40 per cent. all over the union.

(7.) The town of Ballyshannon had in 1881 a population of 2,840 which had decreased in 1891 to 2,421.

Bannadriga, a watering place of some note, had in 1881 a population of 799, Ballintra 463, Belleek 596, Keshbeg 274. These and the smaller villages of Castlefadwell, Geeshane, Tullaghan, and others, have now a larger proportion of the labourers than the country districts, where few remain, but there are a great many small landholders, on the border line between labourers and farmers, who take employment at home when they can get it, and who often migrate in search of work.

(8.) This is especially the case in the county Leitrim part of the union, where there are five electoral divisions, scheduled as congested districts, i.e., having a valuation of less than 11. 5s. 6d. per head of the population.

These five divisions had in 1881 a population of 5,318 and a poor law valuation of 6,496.

One small electoral division in county Donegal is also scheduled, having a population of 771 and a valuation of 820. 12s. 6d.

(9.) The entire district comprised in the union, despite its large population and generally poor character, has reverted to pasture, there being no instance of a tillage farm, with a regular rotation, so far as I could observe or ascertain.

The resident gentry and the largest farmers are generally pure and simple, many of whom do not grow enough of oats to feed their horses, preferring to buy from tillage farmers in other neighbourhoods.

They eat a portion of their pasture land, varying from one fourth to one third, for hay, on which alone they depend for winter food.

The medium sized farmer, who keeps milch cows, tries a little to provide winter keep, but the growth of root-crops and cabbages is greatly neglected over the entire union.

The normal cropping of a small holding, of from 32. to 104. valuations, is from three roads to an acre of potatoes planted with the spade, and a similar quantity of oats succeeding it, the remainder all in grass, of which a large portion, varying according to the size and quality of the holding, is cut for hay.

The following may be taken as a typical case. Thomas Gallagher says "I hold 16 acres of bad land at 4s. judicial rent, fixed in 1882. The poor law valuation is 25 5s. I have about a strain acre of potatoes and the same of oats, and a little hay. I work when I can get it. I get 1s. 6d. a day, and am employed about half-time by one neighbour. Fifteen years ago I had full employment. The larger farmer at 16s. rent is quite as willing to take employment as I am."

I.—SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

(10.) The supply of labour, in the Leitrim part of the union and round Ballyshannon, is much more than sufficient for the present requirements, in the Belleek and Ballintra quarters it is about sufficient, while in the direction of Churchhill it is insufficient, the farmers in that locality depending almost entirely for labour upon men hired in their houses.

The labourer proper is a very scarce over the whole union, except in Ballyshannon, and his place is supplied by the small landholder or his family, who are willing to take employment when they can get it. Many of the young men and young women of this class are employed as hired servants in the houses of the larger farmers, and many migrate to Scotland during a part of the year, or go to America, and from these earnings contribute to the support of the family at home.

(11.) The supply of labourers has greatly decreased during recent years. Owing to the decrease of tillage and the increased area under pasture, only a few men are regularly employed, and many have been obliged to emigrate, or to remove to other parts of the kingdom.

R.—CL.
Paddy
Gardens.
—
Hired men
(Larkin).

The young men hired in the better parts of the union get 30s. 12s. and sometimes 14s. a year, say the average is 32l. With food and lodging, estimated at 3s. 6d. a week, he earns 21l. 2s. a year, or if his wages are 14l. 2s. 2d.

These men are certainly better off than the regular day labourer, but as a set-off they are more strictly bound, and may have, at busy seasons, somewhat longer hours.

Herts.

The herd, who has the goats of two or three cows and their calves, and pigs, and who can break up rough land almost at will, as Rev. Mr. Deane and others say is the nation, is still better off, but it is still more difficult to estimate his earnings. He has no hard work, except in the hay season, and in planting his own crops, and he can turn some money by buying and selling the cattle he is entitled to keep, being generally a bit of a dealer.

Shepherds.

Mr. St. George Johnston, in his return, gives the wages of a shepherd at 1s. 6d. a day, with house and garden, and says, "the best have grazing of cows, but these are exceptional men."

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

Cottages
in country
districts.

(24.) As the class of labourers has decreased, the houses they formerly occupied have fallen into decay, and in the country districts most of them have been entirely removed, a conspicuous example being on the line of road from Ballyshannon to Bundoran, which Mr. Kelly, T.C., said he remembered "crowded with houses," now there are very few, the land being in pasture. The non-handling labourers who remain live chiefly in the towns and villages, except a few on residential places and large farms where they are employed, and the lands on large grazing farms. There seems to be a sufficient supply of cottages for the small number of labourers in the union, and none have been built under the Labourers' (Ireland) Act.

The cottages are built of stone and lime, and thatched sometimes with straw, but more generally with rushes. There are some slated cottages, but they are the exception.

The ordinary thatched cottage in the country districts is roughly built of stone and lime, with two apartments, sometimes three; it is defective in lighting and ventilation, and altogether wanting in drainage, the refuse of the house is conveyed to a heap, where it is mixed with bog stuff, road scrapings, and so forth, and made into a compost which is applied to the potato crop.

The houses of the small landholders are of a sturdier character, but larger, and many of them are neatly and tastefully kept, but their construction is not good.

The condition of the labourers' houses is various, in general fair, but there are conspicuous exceptions. In the towns of Ballyshannon and Bundoran, and the villages of Bellefleur, Garrison and Churchfield, the sanitary laws appear to be in force, and, on a modified degree, the same remark applies to Kesh and Bellefleur.

There are some very wretched cottages in the better villages, but on inquiry I found that their occupants were not wage-earners, being old and frail, and one blind.

Near Tullaghan there are also some poor cabins, and close to Garrison I visited one, where a widow with a family of four, two boys being employed, lives in a cabin measuring 15 by 15, and having only one apartment about 12 feet square. For this she pays expense a week. The "house" she said was formerly double the size, but since her husband's death half was removed.

Cottages.

(25.) There are no out-offices attached to labourers' cottages here, except an occasional shelter for tools. In the case of birds, there is a cowhouse and pigsty. Poultry accommodation is almost unknown.

Tenure of
Cottages.

(26.) The tenure of cottages is various. A few are held free of rent, while employed, being regarded as part payment of wages. Some pay by a day's labour in the week for a cottage and garden, while in the towns and villages some are held by the year, some by the week. In all cases the rates are paid by the owner of the cottage. In the towns and villages it is a week is an ordinary rent, in some cases 2s. a week is paid, as at Bellefleur, where employment in the pottery is regular.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOCATIONS, &c.

(27.) Gardens are not commonly attached to the cottages, and where they exist, are small, and, poorly

kept, where labourers live on the farm where they are employed they get from a root or upwards of potato ground.

Birds generally have gardens, and in addition get as much ground to break as they can manage.

There are no allotments as defined by the Act of 1901.

The only live stock kept by the majority of the labourers consists of fowls. Pigs are very rarely kept, and a cow scarcely ever, except by the birds. I saw no case in which bees were kept.

VL—BENEFIT SOCIETIES AND TRADE UNIONS.

(28.) There are no benefit societies or trade unions within the union.

VII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

(29.) The general relations existing between employer and employed are said by everyone to be good.

VIII.—GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE LABOURER.

(30.) The general condition of the labourer in this union, and of the small landholder, who may be classed as a labourer, cannot be regarded as satisfactory.

From several statements already quoted, it appears clearly that there is a scarcity of employment in the Ballyshannon division, and in the adjoining part of county Leitrim.

Mr. Tottenham, D.L., of Glenties, county Leitrim, says "you will find little to note as to the agricultural labourer, in this district of small farmers."

"They are all labourers without any demand for their labour."

Mr. St. George Johnston, who also lives in Leitrim, says "the smaller farmers are very numerous in this union, and their grown-up sons go to Scotland for constant employment, and return for a time each year."

The day labourers have many employers, and they complain that the farmers cannot always pay up when work is done. On the whole, except for the refuge of migration, the labourers are not in a satisfactory condition, nor likely to improve, as agriculture is decreasing with the profits becoming less. It is needless to add to these statements coming from two gentlemen of position and experience, but it may be remarked that they speak specially of their own locality, where the holdings are of small valuation, and that in the eastern and northern parts of the union a somewhat better state of affairs exists. Under the circumstances above stated, it is creditable to the people of the union to find that the rates are comparatively small.

In the year ended September, 1903, the amount expended for maintenance in the workhouse was 1,915s., and the number relieved 933; the amount expended for outdoor relief being 499s., and the number relieved 338. These two items together amount to 2,414s., or about 71d. in the li., salaries and other expenses "swelling the rate to about 111d., a very moderate expenditure, considering the circumstances of the union.

There is no means of my disposal for estimating the extent of the assistance which the people of the southern end of this union receive from their relatives who have emigrated or what influence it may have in keeping down the rates. The remittances from abroad are no doubt very large and form an important part of the income of some families who might otherwise be thrown upon the rates, but I think, at the same time, there is a strong feeling of independence among these small landholders, which prevents them from resorting to the union except under the most severe pressure.

In conclusion, I trust that, in the near future, a solution may be found to the very grave problem of employing these people at home, and so checking the emigration which has for years been draining the union of the best of its population.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. McCULL,
(Assistant Commissioner).

* During the years 1900, 1901, and 1902, the average expenditure for maintenance has been 1900s. requiring a rate of about 71d. but other expenses have been large, chiefly for outdoor relief.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

IRELAND.

REPORT

BY

MR. R. McCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

ARDEE UNION
(COUNTIES OF LOUTH AND MEATH).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

TO GEOFFREY DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

Sir,
Grange House, Strabane,
28th October 1892.
(1.) I have the honour to submit the following short report on the supply of labour, and the condition of the labourer in the union of Ardee, Ireland.

(2.) I spent 15 consecutive days in the union, namely, from September 22nd to October 5th, during which period I travelled over the entire district, and had many interviews with employers and labourers, as well as with the local clergy.

I also inspected as many cottages as possible, and held two public meetings, one, convened by myself, being attended by employers only, the other, convened by announcement of Rev. Mr. Rogers, F.R.S., and by a newspaper paragraph, was an evening meeting, attended by a very large number of labourers.

The clerk of the union, Mr. Drumgoath, was most obliging in affording me information, and I saw also indebted to several other gentlemen, who were good enough to send me returns on Form No. 2, a summary of which I have placed in an appendix.

(3.) The union of Ardee stretches across the county of Louth from the sea to the boundary of Meath, and includes three electoral divisions in the county Meath. The union has an area of 96,218 acres, and a valuation of 94,328L.

(4.) The population of the union in 1871 was 22,282, in 1881 it was 19,786, and in 1891 it had fallen to 16,774, thus showing a decrease in the past 20 years of almost 25 per cent, and during the past 10 years of 15 per cent.

(5.) The general surface of the union is hilly, rising in the southern part to a height of upwards of 700 feet, and being comparatively level near the coast.

In the centre of the union, round the town of Ardee, the formation is primarily limestone; slaty rocks, apparently of the Cambrian age, underlie the eastern side of the union, while in the high lying country at Collan and Grangeagh the formation is glacial.

With the exception of the electoral divisions of Grangeagh and Collan, nearly all the union is fine agricultural land, excellent for tillage and pasture, barley is largely and successfully grown, and cattle and sheep of good quality are fed.

(6.) There are many handsome residential places scattered over the union, the principal being those of Lord Leitch, Rathfriland, and Massereene; Captain Hughes, C.B.; Sir H. Bulloughston, Bart.; General Wesley, Mr. Fergus, D.L.; Mr. Lee-Norman, D.L.; Mr. Garsin, D.L.; Mr. Hutton, D.L.; Messrs. O'Connor, Downey, O'Riordan, Healy, Rathfriland, and Chesters.

Many of the larger farmers are also men of position and good taste, whose houses and grounds are exceptionally good and well kept, and altogether the district has a rich and prosperous appearance.

(7.) Ardee is the only town of any importance in the union, having a population, according to the census of 1891, of 2,697, and the chief villages are Castleblingham (701), Dunleer (420), and Collan (487). Of these Castleblingham has the only manufacture in the union, a brewery, which employs about 150 men, or almost all the male population.

(8.) There is a weekly market for grain at Ardee, and a stall in the town, and Dundalk and Drogheda are also markets within easy reach of the northern and southern divisions of the union.

These towns having good ports, and lying on the main railway line, and Ardee having to railway accommodation, the trade is consequently drawn towards the ports to the disadvantage of Ardee. Probably, from the same cause, travelling, which was formerly carried on

extensively at Ardee, has been for some time abandoned, the barley, which is here the main crop, being sent to Castleblingham or Dundalk breweries, or bought by agents for transshipment to Dublin.

The population of Ardee has steadily decreased, the fall having been greater during the past decade than in the period between 1871 and 1881. In 1871 its population was 2,977; in 1881, 2,629, and in 1891 it had fallen to 2,067, or upwards of 21 per cent during the past 20 years.

(9.) The electoral divisions of Drummoath and Killary, in the county of Meath, are largely devoted to pasture, and there are some fine grazing farms in the Ardee division, but generally the country has a fair proportion of tillage. Where the farms are small or of medium size, as in the divisions of Clonsilla, Mareeshstown, Tallanstown, Slahamman, Drumm, Dunleer, and Drummoath, with some exceptions, they are closely tilled, while the larger and finer holdings are more devoted to grass.

(10.) Two nice rivers, the Glyde and the Doe, intersect the union, affording ample water power, which is to some extent used, but milling in the country districts has declined. There is a pretty large mill working at Ardee, another at Annagasson, near the coast, and some of smaller size throughout the union.

(11.) There is no harbour, or fishing pier, on the foreshore of the union, but a few miles to the south there is a large pier, at Clough Head, designed to accommodate the population of the fishing village of Clough, who number 655, as well as the inhabitants of Clough parish and the adjoining coast.

The village and parish and the small village of Annagasson are the only places in or near the union which do not show a serious loss of population during the past 10 years, from 1881 to 1891, Clough having lost only nine inhabitants and Clough parish 14, while Annagasson, which exhibited the rare phenomenon of a village (other than manufacturing) growing in population from 1861 to 1881, fell during the past 10 years from 222 to 209.

The Clough and Annagasson fisheries are very fine, and many of whom migrate for four months, from May till September, going to the West Highlands, and sometimes as far as the German Ocean, where they find remunerative employment in the Scotch boats until the herring appear on their own coast in autumn, when they return. They appear to be hardy, industrious men, but they complain that their fine fishing at home has been injured by the trawlers, and that they cannot make a good living without migrating.

Some of the fishermen at Annagasson are poorly housed, but the boats of guardians are at present erecting cottages, four of which are intended for fishermen, and more are required.

(12.) Employment is good over the union generally, the town of Ardee being the only place where there is any complaint as to scarcity of work, and that only during winter. Employers, however, say that the class in Ardee who complain are not willing to work continuously, preferring to remain idle except at busy seasons when they can stand out for high wages. It is also alleged that they could obtain regular employment by going to a greater distance into the country, and I think there is some truth in this, as during my inspection of cottages in the lanes of the town I saw several young men unemployed, although the harvest was not quite over at the time.

Wages during harvest rose up to a high rate, in past years to a day having been paid. This year, owing to the use of binding machines on some large farms,

10-111.
ARDES.

wages did not rise above 4s., and only touched that rate for a day or two.

The casual labourers of Ardes town engage during harvest for a single day only, and the rate of wages is therefore very fluctuating, during the lucky harvest of this year it went up and down every day, 4s. being the highest and 2s. 6d. the lowest, nothing being at the latter price after the greater part had been engaged, and gangs of men employed to attend threshing machines were working at 2s. 6d. a day when I left the town on the 14th October.

Original
under
Labourers'
Act.

(13.) The cottages in the union appear to have been originally built of clay, and a few of these primitive buildings may still be seen, but the greater number have long since been replaced by stone cottages, some of which are very well built and beautiful in design, notably Lord Leech's, Lord Rathdown's, Lord Bellaw's, Sir H. Bellingham's, Mr. Henry's, and Mr. Chesnut's. The band of guardians a few years ago built 123 cottages under the Labourers' (Ireland) Act, and 35 more are now in progress.

With these cottages half an acre of garden is provided, except in a few cases where they were built in the centre of the town, and where the plot is smaller. In one electoral division the sites were purchased at 12s. 10s. each; in the others the sites are held on lease for 99 years at an average rent of 15s. 10s. The building of the cottages, including preliminary expenses, cost 112s. each, and they have attached a flagstone, front-house, and two useful sanitary arrangements, and although small for the money, they are comfortable, and have been substantially built.

They contain a kitchen 18 x 12, with tiled floor, and two bedrooms 12 x 9 each, boarded and lathed throughout.

The only mistake attending the scheme seems to have been the building of some of the cottages in the suburbs of the town of Ardes, where there is a superabundance of labour, instead of one in the country, where they would have been more useful.

The rent charged for the cottages and half acre of garden is 3s. 6d. a week over the union ground, and is in the division of Colton and Garagahaghy, where the soil is inferior. The rent of the cottages have been regularly paid, only one case of default having occurred.

For the purpose of carrying out these two schemes, the guardians have borrowed 19,822 10s., repayable in 50 years, at 3½ per cent., a very moderate charge as to such a town as Ardes.

Meeting
10-111.

(14.) During my stay in the union, as already mentioned, I held two public meetings. One of these, convened by circular, was attended by the chairman and other members of the board of guardians, all of whom are large employers, from whom I received valuable information, several of them subsequently sending in returns on Form No. 3.

The second meeting for the labourers was held on the evening of the 3rd October, at 8 o'clock, and was attended by upwards of two hundred persons. Rev. Mr. Rogers, P.P., of Ardes, who assisted in convening the meeting, was present and presided, but did not tender any statement, and only a few of the labourers seemed disposed to come forward.

Peter Kerr, a stone-mason, who appeared as the representative of the labourers of Tullinstown, complained on their behalf that they were insufficiently paid, that their hours of work were too long, and that favoritism was shown by the guardians in the allocation of cottages.

These statements did not seem to meet with the approval of the labourers present, who heard Mr. Kerr impatiently. He, however, called attention at the close of his statement to the fact which cannot be denied, that "there are some very bad houses in the town of Ardes," and he expressed the opinion in which I concur, that "the sanitary laws are not sufficiently enforced."

Matthew Ward said, "I live in one of the guardians' cottages, paying 3s. 6d. a week for the cottage, and "half a statute acre of garden; I have 3s. a week round "the year. My sons work to whom they like. They "may be out of employment at times, but earn as "much as a 'bound' man. I would take my chance "not to be 'bound'."

This expresses exactly the position and views of the class of casual labourers in the vicinity of the town, who prefer to stand out for high wages during the busy season, and either remain idle during winter, or take their chance of odd jobs.

The
Associates
of
Ardes
Labourers.

Thomas Hughes said, "I am a 'bound' man. I got 7s. a week and my son, 16 years of age, 5s. I got my "cottage and half a rood (Irish) of garden free, and a "rood (Irish) of potatoes manured and planted by my "employer, for which I provide the seed. I got a ton "of coal this year. There is a kitchen and two rooms "in my cottage. The hours are long, from six in the "morning till seven at night. When going to market "I get 1s. a day for expenses. The engagements are "from May to May, but new agreements are made in "February, and the new master plants the potatoes. "I come to the stable at six o'clock, go out at seven, "my breakfast is brought to the field, we dine from "twelve to one, and work till seven in the evening. "In the short days, we breakfast before starting, thus "from twelve to one, and work from daylight to "dark."

Thomas Hughes said, "I am a ploughman. I got 8s. a week, and my cottage and garden. If there is a "wet day, I am not paid. I get potatoes planted and "manured, for which I pay at the rate of 10s. an Irish "acre. There are 15 acres on the farm. Cattle work "are paid an extra day's wages for Stewley work. "The hours are from 6.30 to 12, and from 1 to 6.30 p.m., "or 11 hours work in summer."

Having made these general observations, I may now proceed to give more definite replies to the questions suggested under the various heads of inquiry.

I.—SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

(15.) The supply of labour in most parts of the union appears to be equal to the demand, except during the brief of the harvest, while in some limited districts it is said to be severely deficient.

The moderate rate of wages paid to men employed by the year would lead to the impression that the supply is sufficient, while, on the other hand, the fact that wages experience a more than ordinary rise during harvest, indicates that the supply of labour is insufficient to meet the exigencies of that season, and the further fact that there is some immigration during the harvest from an adjoining county tends to corroborate this view.

(16.) There has been a decrease of labour all over the union during the past 10 years, which Mr. O'Brien, a large farmer, estimates at 15 per cent., which closely corresponds with the fall in the population during the past decade.

(17.) Of eight employers whose returns I have summarized in an appendix, five say that the labourer is not so efficient as formerly, one says the efficiency is good, and two say it is fairly good.

(18.) As compared with other districts some employers say it is better than in other districts, while the steward of one very large property says it is not so good as in other places known to him.

II.—CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

(19.) Over the union generally men are employed on the large farms by the year, the cottages being supplied free, and employment being regular and continuous; the farm house being May but the agreement made in February, so that three months' notice is given at the change, and where a change takes place the new employer plants the labourer's potatoes.

(20.) In and around the town of Ardes, and in the cottages built by the board, there are some casual labourers who engage sometimes by the week, and during harvest by the day only, the practice being for the labourers to meet the farmers or stewards every morning in the town and arrange the rate of wages for the day, which, as before stated, fluctuates according to the state of the weather and the forwardness of the grain.

(21.) There is another class, the men hired by the small or medium-sized farmers, who are bonded and lodged in the employer's house. Some of these men belong to the union, but others, perhaps the majority, come from the county Monaghan, and see generally the sons of small farmers. Their engagements last for six months.

(22.) The hours of labour vary in the Ardes Union from 10 to 11 hours in summer, some beginning work at 6 a.m., others not till 7 o'clock. In winter from daylight till dark defines the time men are employed in the fields, those in charge of horses and cattle commencing earlier.

Mr. Shera, steward to Lord Leech, gives 11 hours in summer, but says that the small farmers work these

Increase or
decrease.

Efficiency.

As compared
with other
districts.

Casual
labourers.

Bonded men.

Hours of
labour.

THE
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LABOURER.

R.—E.L.
A.—E.L.

men longer hours, to which he objects; and he expresses the opinion that from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one hour for dinner is the proper working day, and that there is as good a day's work done, if not better, than where longer hours are kept.

Mr. Shiel (steward to H. St. George Smith), Mr. Tassie, and Mr. Doran, give 11 hours in summer, Mr. Rutherford 10½, Mr. Collan 10½, while Mr. Driff, P.L.G., and Mr. Sadler, steward to Captain Singleton, state 10 hours to be their working day in summer.

Meal times.

(53) The meal times vary on different farms. Where work is commenced at 6 a.m., half an hour is allowed for breakfast and an hour for dinner; where 7 a.m. is the hour for beginning, breakfast is usually taken before going out, and an hour for dinner only allowed.

The hours of labour may be regarded as varying from 10 to 11 hours in summer and from seven to nine in winter.

Sheep
work.

(54) Only men in charge of cattle and horses are employed on Sunday, the horsesmen for a very short time, watering and feeding Mr. Doran, a large farmer, who keeps flocks in winter, says, "Food is prepared for cattle on Saturday, and two or three men are employed about two hours on Sunday in giving water to the cattle."

Mr. Sadler employs five herds and six cattle-men on Sunday, but he does not state what proportion this bears to the whole number employed.

Mr. Shera says one to 20 only are employed on Sunday.

III.—WAGES AND ALLOWANCES.

Ordinary
labourers.

(55) The current rate of wages for ordinary labourers employed by the year, or "bound" men as they are termed, is from 7s. to 8s. a week, with the allowances afterwards explained. Ploughmen and cattle men get 9s. and sometimes 10s. with similar allowances, and shepherds get still more liberal terms.

General
labourers.

(56) General labourers in harvest get from 2s. 6d. to 5s. a day. Last year the rate rose to 5s., but this year 4s. was the highest rate paid, and that only for a day or two, the decline from last year's price being attributed to the introduction of binders. The wages of these men is fixed only for one day, and a new negotiation proceeds every morning between the employers or their stewards and the men. One large farmer showed me his book, beginning at 4s., going down to 3s., then to 2s. 6d. and up again to 3s. 8d. during one week, down to 2s. 6d. the following week, and settling steadily at 2s. 6d. after half or more of the barley had been cut, and 2s. 6d. was the current wages for casual men attending threshing machines, when I left the union.

Men hired by the six months, and boarded and lodged in the master's house, get 8l. to 10l. in the half year, and a free-rate man sometimes more.

Wages of
hired men.

(57) There is very little employment by piecework. Mr. Shera, steward to Lord Leitch, gives ranging of corn with the sickle, which he says costs 35s. to 45s. per Irish acre, equal to 2l. 6d. to 2l. 7s. 6d. per statute acre, but this very high rate can only apply to grass so heavy and hard that it could not be reaped by any other method.

Another gentleman gives mowing of meadows, for which he pays 7s. 6d. per acre, but the practice is very unusual.

Haytime
and harvest.

(58) The regular, or "bound" labourer does not generally get any allowance or extra wages in haytime or harvest. The casual labourer is paid by the day, according to the demand, from 2s. to 3s. in haytime, and from 2s. 6d. to 4s. in harvest.

Provisions,
allowances,
&c.

(59) The "bound" labourer, in almost every case, has his cottage and small garden free, and his employer measures and plants an Irish rood of potatoes for him, the labourer supplying the seed only, and where the labourer has means he gets planted for him generally as much more potatoes as he can manage properly. Where several members of a family work on a farm, the custom is to give an increased quantity of potato ground, up to half an Irish acre, where there are three of the household working. Charriage of coals is usually given, in some cases milk, and shepherds and cattle men generally have the grass of a cow and calf. On some large places grass for a cow is given at half price, and firewood is given on similar places, but not commonly throughout the union. There are some exceptions to the rule as to free potato grounds. A few employers give only the labourer's cottage and garden free,

charging at the rate of 8l. or 10l.* per Irish acre, equivalent to about 4s. to 4l. per statute acre, for measured potato ground. These appear, however, to be isolated cases, the prevailing practice being that the labourer has his potato ground measured and planted free, with the exception of the seed, which he himself provides.

Estimated
annual
allowances.

(60) The annual earnings of the ordinary labourer, including all allowances, are variously estimated by employers at from 24l. to 28l., and those of first-rate ploughmen and cattle men from 30l. to 35l., the latter being the estimate of Mr. Shera, steward to Lord Leitch. Mr. Rutherford, a large grazier, gives 24l. as his estimate for all classes of labourers. Mr. W. Doran gives 24l. 18s. Mr. Tassie estimates a shepherd's earnings at 30s., and cow's grass, while Mr. Shera puts down a shepherd's wages at 48s., but he seems to put a somewhat high value on his "allowances."

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

(61) The supply of cottages, as regards number, is fully equal to the demand, there being some unoccupied cottages in almost every part of the union.

According to the census returns of 1891, there were 323 unoccupied houses in the union, against 3,528 occupied; but many of these vacant houses are much dilapidated, and others going rapidly to decay, the smallest number being 21 for habitation.

As regards the quality of the cottages, and particularly garden or allotment accommodations, a great improvement has been effected by the board of guardians, who built, a few years ago, 128 cottages under the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts, and have at present 30 more in course of erection, particularly as to the mode of construction of which have been already given in paragraph 13.

The villages of Castlebliss, Dunleer, Collan, and Tallanstown, have many excellent cottages, and on several residential places in the union there are also some of beautiful design, and more than average comfort.

The cottages provided by the farmers vary greatly in their construction and in the amount of accommodation provided. Some of them are old thatched buildings, with walls of mud or stone, sometimes of both, others are of modern design, substantially built and abated, with from two to four apartments, but there are still the minority.

The number of apartments is usually two, sometimes three, and in the best class of country cottages, and more generally in the villages, four apartments are found. Most of the country cottages are defective in drainage and ventilation, but the greatest defect is the almost universal want of sanitary accommodation.

Unsanitary
cottages.

(62) In the town of Ardee, Duke Street, Shanbally Lane, and Dawson's Avenue, contain some bad cottages, several in the "Avenue" having only one apartment, and many of these having two apartments being very unsanitary. The clerk of the union informed me that no prosecutions had been undertaken for years by the sanitary authority, although many cases had been reported by the medical officer.

In this connection I may refer to a class of colonies near Ardee, which are inhabited by bog tenants, who, I was informed, have quitted here from time to time, and some of whom it is said, have never been brought under rent. Some of these people have built little stone houses, while others inhabit huts built of bog sods, and which at a little distance have no appearance of human habitations.

Their inhabitants, however, are said to be healthy, and they are reported to be as well off as they rarely take employment from the neighbouring farmers.

They make a living by tilting peat from the bog and by the sale of turf.

(63) The water supply over the union is fair, grants having been erected where required, and the quality of the water appears to be excellent.

Water
supply.

(64) In the country, as has been stated, cottages are held from the farmer free, as part of the labourer's bargain, while employed.

The term time is May, with three months' notice.

In the villages it is different, the usual tenure being by the week, in others by the month, and but few by the year.

Term of
hire.

* See returns by Mr. Sadler in Appendix and statement by Thomas Kenney, quoted in paragraph 14.

R.—[EL.
ARDES.]

In the village of Dunbar, a large number of cottages are held under fixed Rellor at moderate rents compared with the accommodation; those with two apartments below and an attic paying 5s. 3d. a month, others of four apartments 5s. 10s. and 6s. 6d. a month, each cottage having a garden of about half a rood.

In the town of Ardes rents vary from 8d. a week for a wretched cabin of one apartment, 14 x 18, up to 1s. 8d. for comfortable cottages with three apartments.

V.—GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS.

(35) Gardens of small size are general in the country, and in many cases are also attached to cottages in the villages. They vary in size from a few perches up to half a rood, and in some cases, but rarely, extend to half an acre.

Half an acre is attached to each of the board's cottages, except a few which have been built in the suburbs of Ardes, where there was not sufficient available land. The gardens are finely tilled, the crops grown being potatoes and cabbage, and in some instances oats in turn for a change.

(36) There are no allotments, as defined by the Act of 1891.

(37) Potato grounds are provided by the farmers, as explained in paragraph 29.

(38) There are no cow runs or cow pastures provided for labourers, with the few exceptions mentioned under paragraph 29.

(39) Pigs and fowls are the chief live stock, and in some cases goats. Bees are rare.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES AND TRADE UNIONS.

(40) There are no benefit societies or Trades Unions in operation at present among the agricultural labourers of the union. One of the guardians on whom I called informed me that there was a benefit society in the division of Killybeg some years ago, which numbered 150 members; that the objects were to provide assistance to members out of employment at whole wages, and for burial expenses, but that the society had gradually dwindled away.

VII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

(41) The general relations between employer and employed are reported to be satisfactory, except by one employer, who says, "Good in some cases, in others bad." Disputes are, of course, inevitable, but, from what I saw of the labourers, they appeared to be a good-humoured, industrious class of men, going about their work in a fairly willing way, and a large proportion of the farmers with whom I met would compare favourably with those of the best districts of Ireland.

VIII.—GENERAL CONDITION OF THE LABOURER.

(42) The general condition of the labourer in the Ardes Union is fair compared with other purely agricultural districts. Mr. Doonan, in his return, sums it up thus: "Where three or four are employed from the family, good; where single labourer with a young family, bad."

This is very generally the condition of affairs with the agricultural labourer.

While his children are young the labourer as such seldom wages as prevail in this union can have but few comforts. As the members of his family grow up and become self-supporting he is for a number of years well off; but when they leave him, to marry or emigrate, he is again left in a poor and sometimes a dependent condition, ending in the union.

Nothing, however, is more noteworthy in the Irish character than the strong and affectionate regard shown to the aged and infirm, a member of a family often remaining with them and supporting them through long periods of frailty.

Mr. Rotherford says, "there is much room for improvement in the general condition of the agricultural labourer," but he does not specify in his return any grievance the labourer has except the statement as to the bad condition of his house, and certainly some of the houses are very poor.

Mr. Stara thinks the hours of labour are too long, and that as the man grows old the labourers themselves put forward with, as might be expected, the low rate of wages. Mr. Sadler thinks their condition is, "on an average, all sound, good, save a few who spend their earnings on drink." I think it only fair to say, that although harvest wages were being earned and a large fair occurred in the town during my stay, I thought the people were noticeable for sobriety.

If the sanitary laws were put in force and the hours of labour in some cases slightly reduced, I think the labourers of this union would be in a satisfactory position.

The very low price of headstuffs of late has been a great boon to the labourer, but it is accompanied by a danger in the decline of flings, and the consequent loss of employment.

The labourers of the town of Ardes have somewhat less regular employment than those of the other divisions; the maling trade of the town having died out, and so other industry substituted, the working population is rather too large to find employment at a convenient distance.

A railway is about to be made to connect Ardes with the main line, which it is hoped may revive the trade of the place and thus improve the position of the labourer.

In conclusion, I am inclined to think the condition of the agricultural labourer in the union of Ardes is a hopeful one, and likely to improve.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. McCRA.

[Assistant Commissioner.]

Yes
Agricultural
Labourer.

APPENDIX.

James Vance — Abolition of Returns from Field Employees.

[illegible]

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. McCREA

(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER).

UPON THE

DOWNPATRICK UNION

(CO. DOWN).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

TO GEORGE DEACON, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

George House, Strabane,
12th November 1892.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following facts and observations as to the condition of the agricultural labourer in the Union of Downpatrick, Ireland, the result of a visit paid to that district, extending from the 13th to the 29th October.

2 The Union of Downpatrick is situated in the eastern part of the County Down, being bounded on the south by Dundrum Bay and by the mountainous country of the Kilkeel Union, on the west by the Unions of Banbridge and Lurgan, on the north by Newtownards, and on the east by the sea. The Union is very compact, and accessible by rail from Belfast, with the exception of the Portaferry district, which is cut off by Strangford Lough, an arm of the sea running northward for nearly twenty miles. This inlet, however, affords great facilities for the carriage of heavy goods into the ports of Portaferry, Killybegs, and Strangford, and for the shipment of farm produce from the same places.

3 The soil, over the entire Union, rests on clay rocks, tilted almost on end, and coming to the surface here and there in small patches, which are generally covered with furze.

The country is hilly and dry, and rising into mountains at its part, and having very little timber or underwood, except on large demesnes, and entirely any bog.

4 The Union is a very large and rich one, having an area of 147,490 acres, and a valuation of 177,752 £ 19 s.

5 Besides the county town, Downpatrick, with a population of 1,132, the Union contains the thriving inland towns of Ballynahinch, population 1,542; Castlewellan, 895 (or with its suburbs, Clontarf, 1,243; Shrigley, 838; Crossgar, 683; Drumcress, 584, besides Clough, Seaford, and other small villages. It has also the ports of Portaferry, 1,244; Killybegs, 1,513; Strangford, 592; Ardglass, 544; Killybegs, 385; and Dundrum, 479.

6 At Castlewellan, Shrigley, Killybegs, and Drumcress, there are large factories for the manufacture of linen; and near Portaferry there is a mill for pressing designated potatoes, at which establishments there are employed between 1,500 and 2,000 people.

7 There are also a large number of fishermen and seafaring men at the various ports on the coast, so that the Union is one of very mixed industries. This variety in the employment of the people, and especially the existence of the linen manufactures, has a direct effect upon the wages of the agricultural labourer, as there is a constant tendency with families to move towards the mills, where the women and girls find steady employment as well as the men.

8 The arable land of the Union is returned at 68½ per cent. of the entire area; 51 per cent. as under crops requiring much labour; 49 per cent. of the male population over twenty years of age are classed as agricultural, and the wage-earners in agriculture amount to 21½ per cent.

Speaking generally, the Union may be described as consisting of good, dry hilly arable, varying from medium to rather light clay, the greater part of which is well cultivated, and in a productive state. The principal crops are potatoes, turnips, oats, flax and clover hay.

Between Downpatrick and Strangford, and again between Downpatrick and Ballynahinch, tracts of high lying land, much below the average quality of the Union, are found, and in these districts the holdings are small.

There are also a great many small tenants on the coast, many of whom are fishermen, and in the western part of the Union there are also many small landholders, many of whose families are employed at Castlewellan and Drumcress factories, and as hired men and maid servants in the houses of the large farmers.

9 The population of the Downpatrick Union, in 1881, was 48,138, which had fallen in 1891 to 43,234, a decrease of 15 per cent. in the ten years.

This is attributed to emigration, and removals to Belfast, and the consequence is that labour, which for some years has been almost equal to requirements, is becoming scarce, and wages have gone up, and have an upward tendency; and the rates are lower than in any Union in Ireland, with the solitary exception of the adjoining Union of Lurgan.

10 The size of farms varies very much in the Union, the average being about 25 acres. These may be up to ten per cent. of the holdings from 50 acres up to 500, about 30 per cent. from 20 to 50 acres, and perhaps 60 per cent. under 20 acres.

From the latter class a good many of the young men are derived who are hired in the large farmers' houses.

11 The custom of finding the labourers in the employer's house is very general in the Union, and applies not only to the men hired by the six months and lodged in the house, but to those living in cottages on the farm, or in the neighbourhood.

For instance, Mr. Martin, whose holdings are valued at 430 £, employs thirteen men, eight of whom are married, and have five cottages and potato ground for a moderate payment; the other five are young men hired by the half year, and all are fed in the house. Employers say that the men are more efficient and more punctual to hours when fed by the employer; others say that it is as good a market as they can get for part of their produce, and it has become the general rule of hiring of the agricultural labourer in this Union, except in the case of those employed by the resident proprietors, some of whom keep up large farming establishments.

12 Among these may be noted Lord Annesley at Castlewellan, Col. Fife, D.L., Seaford, and Major R. P. Maxwell, D.L., Farneskings, the latter of whom gave me some particulars as to his estate.

13 The valuation of the demesne and house farm of Farneskings is 1,100 £.

Thirty-four labourers are employed, besides gardeners, groovers, and tradesmen, and in summer a boat's crew of five fishermen, the only for wages being about 130 £ a month. Farm labourers are paid 15s to 12s a week, boys and girls 1s to 7s, tradesmen up to 5s a day, and fishermen 3s a while employed.

The men who live on the place have allotments of about two and a half acres, with good cottages, containing four apartments and a poultry, for which they pay 42 10s a year.

14 Mr. Quinn states, as to Lord Annesley's cottages, that they consist from two up to five apartments, and have good outhouses and gardens of twenty to thirty perches, some being rent free, and 1s a week being charged for the best.

Colonel Fife has excellent four-roomed cottages in the village of Seaford for his labourers, but I did not obtain particulars as to this estate.

In the village of Killybegs Lord Bangor has a large number of cottages, occupied chiefly by fishermen and seafaring people, but some by labourers.

These cottages are kept in repair at Lord Bangor's expense, Mr. Finlay, the under agent, living in the village, and managing them. The rents vary from 6d and 3d for the smallest to 2s a week for four-roomed cottages, with suitable offices and small gardens.

In the neighbouring village of Ardglass there are also good cottages on the Bangor estate, occupied chiefly by fishermen and seafarers.

Mr. Marland has quite a village of excellent cottages at Annesley near Castlewellan, for the accommodation of his workmen, built, however, not in rows, but in blocks of two, which is a great improvement on the ordinary crowded village, and with good yards and sanitary arrangements.

Similar cottages have been built at the Shrigley factory, near Killybegs, and at Drumcress, near Ballynahinch, these villages having been created by the factories.

15-20.
Downpatrick,
1892.

Population.

Size of farms.

Custom of finding labourers.

Resident proprietors.

Cottages on various estates.

U-IV.
Dundrum.

In two little towns of Dundrum there are some good cottages, the property of the Marquis of Downshire, who has a sea-side residence on the bay, where twenty men are employed at from 10s to 15s a week, with the privilege of going to the Steamship Company when required to load or discharge a boat. The cottages have from three to four apartments, with efficient and small gardens, and are let at rents varying from 10s to 1s-6d a week.

Four very tasteful cottages on the Hon. General Ward's place, near Strangford, attracted my attention. They are built in a block, about 84 feet long by 84 feet wide, and two stories high, each having four apartments and rear accommodation, and a small garden attached. Being well designed, capably furnished, and most tastefully kept, these may be regarded as model cottages well worthy of imitation.

Persons' cottages.

15. The cottages on the farmers' holdings are generally rather poor, being defective both in space and in the number of apartments. There are, however, exceptions, as on the farm of Mr. Hughes, of Hollyvillage, a mill holding of 89l. valuation, where there are five fairly good two-story cottages, with three small apartments in each, but like the majority of others in country districts, they are wanting in sanitary accommodation.

Very few cottages appear to have been built under the provisions of the Land Act, but I noticed one of exceptional merit newly erected on the farm of Miss Connor, at Hollyvillage, which measures 48 by 18, and has five apartments.

There are two newly-built cottages near Dunsford, which I suspected might have been ordered by the same authority, but I did not see the owner, nor could I learn particulars. These are well-built, but very small, and poor in their plan, the two measuring only 48 by 16 outside, and one story high, and having each two small apartments. They are built upon the very edge of a public road, contrary to law, and have no back doors or yards of any sort, so that the refuse and other waste are deposited on the roadside.

Cottages at Dunsford.

16. In the village of Omagur I saw a cottage with only one apartment about 14 feet square, at a rent of 6d a week, and about a mile from the village another consisting of one apartment 15 by 12, which, with four or five perches of garden, pays 1s a year rent, the roof being kept up by the tenant. There are, however, many fair cottages in Omagur at rents of 1s 6d a week, and some are ones, which would be comfortable if proper fire-accommodation were provided.

As in other villages in the Union, many of the cottages here have small gardens attached.

Hollyvillage.

17. In the outskirts of the town of Hollyvillage there are some cottages scarcely fit for habitation, a number standing a little back from the Leigra-road, being of the character described by Dr. Haughton, to whose report on their condition I beg to refer.

Town of Hollyvillage.

18. In the older streets of Downpatrick, towards the top of Bridge-street, one side of the street has very bad labourers' tenements, many of which, paying 1s 6d a week, have no sanitary accommodation, and in Sand-street, Scotch-street, Gallon's-hill, and John-street, there are many of a similar character.

Village of Ballyn.

19. The village of Ballyn (on the old hill road from Downpatrick to Strangford), and its continuation towards the creek in the townland of Ballinagher, afford perhaps the worst specimens of cottages in the Union, several in Ballinagher having only one apartment, and situated in a wretched state, scarcely fit for human habitation, and certainly very unsuitable for a family of well-employed labourers.

Downpatrick.

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Ballyn.

agricultural produce, and particularly of the class of cattle reared by the small farmer, which have been almost unobtainable.

This would naturally cause an increased number to look for employment.

22. The number of workmen from other Unions is so small as to be of no importance in determining the supply of labour.

Some come to the hiring markets near the verge of the Union, and engage as half-yearly men, but few, if any, travel into the Union in search of harvest work.

23. The efficiency of the labourer is reported as variously by different employers, but the general opinion is that, while not so efficient as formerly, the labourers here would compare favourably with other districts.

Two Agents, Great Lakes.

Labourers.

Efficiency.

II.—CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT.

24. Employment, as a rule, is regular and continuous, engagements of hired men, and in some cases of those having cottages, being by the half-year. Where the supply of home labour is comparatively scanty, or where the local supply is largely taken up by other employments, farmers often go to hiring markets in the distant towns, where the population is more dense, or where employment is not so strict, for the purpose of hiring men, and it will thus be seen that the practice of hiring young men to live in the farmers' houses tends to equalize the rate of wages in the various districts of the Union.

25. The half-yearly terms are 1st May and 1st November, the hiring markets being held in the towns during April and October.

Term times.

A small rate is given as "aries," or earnest money, to make the bargain binding, but as employers, Mr. Hay, states, that breaches of contract are frequent, which he attributes to the operation of the Act 26 & 27 Vic.

26. In other cases, and more generally, the labourers live in cottages on the farms where they are employed, but here again they are engaged to most cases by the half-year, at a regular weekly wage, free home and garden, and food in employer's house.

Labourers living on farms.

One report only states employment to be casual and intermittent, this being in a district of small farms, where presumably the men are employed part of the time on their own or their fathers' holdings.

There are, of course, general labourers in the towns and villages, who take short jobs wherever they can find them, but the general body of the labourers of the Union, so far as I could learn, have constant and regular employment, at good wages.

27. The hours of work in summer are either from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one and-a-half to two hours for meals, or from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one hour for dinner; in the latter case the labourers go to the yard at 6 a.m. to feed, and come in for breakfast before going to the fields.

Hours of work.

The hours of labour are therefore from 10 to 10½ in summer, and vary according to the length of the day in winter.

28. Only about one-fourth of the men are employed on Sunday, for six hours in winter, and for a shorter time in summer, and it is customary to give cattle-men assistance on alternate Sundays.

Sunday work.

III.—WAGES AND EXPENSES.

29. The weekly wages most generally reported is 12s. On one large place the rate is from 10s to 12s, on another from 10s to 14s, while one report gives from 14s to 18s as the current rate during the preceding twelve months. This may be explained, however, by the fact that a railway was in course of construction in that neighbourhood, and that the supply of labour is derived chiefly from a village, where the cottages are held from an independent owner.

The married labourer, living on the farm where he is employed, gets 6s a week, sometimes 7s, his cottage and garden, and board in his employer's house. If not living on the farm, he gets 6s a week and board, without any perquisites.

30. Young men, hired by the six months get 7l or 8l, and board and lodging, or where they are ploughmen, and can do all the work of a farm, 10l in the half-year, and 12l and some who have 10l 6s and 10l 10s, which appears to be about the extreme rate, so far as I could ascertain.

Hired men.

Taking the value of his feed at 19s, this would bring the earnings of the better class of hired men up to 30s or 31l, or estimating his board and lodgings at 12s, to from 32s to 33l a year, which differs little from that of the weekly labourer constantly employed at 12s.

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31. Town labourers with whom I talked while visiting their cottages, told me that 12s. was their usual wages, some few getting more.

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32. No piece-work is given, and men employed regularly, get as a rule, no extra harvest wages. In some exceptional cases 6d. a day extra is paid in hay-time and harvest.

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33. Men brought in during harvest get 10s. to 12s. a week and food, and in one neighbourhood 11s. a week is paid for moving.

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34. In some places coals and milk are given, but these are the exceptions; as a rule, the cottage and garden are the only extras.

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35. There is no occasional employment of farm labourers at other occupations, but there are some other trades and employments which do not last the whole year, those engaged in them being casual labourers on farms at such times as they are not required in their regular occupations.

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36. One of these is flax scrubbing and rolling, and the remarks made upon it in the Coolistown Union may be regarded as applicable here, and need not be repeated.

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37. Near Persiferry there is a factory for the preparation of desiccated potatoes, which employs thirty men and about fifty women for eight months, namely, from September (when the potato crop is matured) till May, when the quality begins to fall; and the operatives are thus free for four months to engage in farm labour during the busy season.

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38. Of employments other than agricultural, the most important by far, and the one which has had the greatest effect in improving the position of the labourer, is the linen manufacture, which is carried on extensively in four places within the Union.

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39. The existence of this trade has not only raised the price of labour, but has given chance of employment, and has enabled many labourers to put their families into positions where opportunities for promotion more frequently arise than in agricultural employment.

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40. As might be expected from the extent of its coast-line, the number of its small ports, and their proximity to the English markets, there is a large fishing and sea-faring population in the Downpatrick Union. Ardgliss, Killybegs, Portaferry, Strangford, and Dromore, are the chief ports, but there are fishing boats all along the coast, and a great many just outside the bounds of the Union, at Portaferry, in the Union of Newtownards.

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41. In the fishing district of Strangford, the returns give seventy-eight vessels engaged in sea fishing, manned by one hundred and forty-four men and ten boys, and in the Newcastle district, which includes Ardgliss and Killybegs, 134 vessels, employing 885 men and forty boys. The latter district extends some distance to the south of the limits of the Union, but on the other hand the Strangford district does not reach its northern limit, so that it is far to estimate the fishermen of the Downpatrick Union at upwards of 500, but a good many of these are small landholders, who fish occasionally only.

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42. Many of the fishermen of Ardgliss and Killybegs, I was informed, go to sea during the winter, and return for the spring fishing, and some of them become permanent seafaring men.

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43. The estimated annual earnings of a good man, in the prime of life, who can do all the heavy work of a farm, may be taken, as stated in paragraph 30, at about 35l.

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44. Mr. Finlay in his report puts it down at 30l. to 35l. Young men leaving their business, and elderly men who are past their best, get proportionately less, perhaps about 25l.

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45. There are but few special shepherds, only one return refers to them, giving a shepherd's wages on a nobleman's home farm at 52l. with free house and fuel.

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46. The men in charge of herds are a little better paid than the ordinary labourers, but the difference is slight.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

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47. The supply of cottages in the Union, as regards number, is quite sufficient, and a good many are unoccupied, both in Downpatrick and in some of the villages, but this is more rarely the case in the country.

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48. I have already referred at considerable length to the condition of the cottages in the Union. Some years ago the question came before the board of guardians, with a view to the dismantling of a scheme under the Labourers' Acts, but no action was taken, it being thought sufficient to direct greater attention to be paid to sanitary matters, and I was told that the agitation

of the question had the effect for a time of improving matters. It would certainly be a great boon to the labourers if the sanitary laws were put in force, and a proper room provided for every rent-paying cottage, but some of the cabins in the Union are so bad that I fail to see how the local authority could avoid taking action, if a representation were made to them under the Labourers' Acts, say, in the case of Bally or Ballynagar, to which reference has been made in paragraph 18.

These two townlands, although forming practically one village, are, I think, in two electoral divisions, which would afford a most suitable field in which to inaugurate a small scheme of cottage building.

In a Union so rich as Downpatrick, and where the labourers are so well employed, it is difficult to refrain from speaking strongly on this point, as it is a disgrace to so fine a part of the country to have so wretched a place within its bounds.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

49. Gardens are general in some of the villages, and in some parts of the country districts, in others they are not so common. In almost all cases they are small, the most usual size being about half a rood, and some are even smaller.

A few are said to have a rood, but I think they are very badly in number. The cultivation does not generally extend beyond potatoes and cabbage.

50. There are no allotments on the English system, but there are many small landholders, whose families go out to service, and the labourers on some home farms, such as Major Maxwell's, have allotments, as described in paragraph 13.

51. Potato grounds are not so liberally given in this Union as in some other parts of the north of Ireland.

This old usage appears to have decreased as the rate of wages increased, and there are now distinct practices with regard to it in different districts, and on different farms in the same district.

Some returns say ground is given for any manure the labourer may have after planting his garden, others say half a rood is given, one says a rood, while another says that potato ground is not customary in this district, but that two or three loads of potatoes are given, and another plants manure and seeds, half a rood (Irish) for each married labourer, for which he charges 1l.

52. There are no cow-patches given or rented to labourers on farms in this Union, the only case reported being that of a shepherd on a large residential place.

53. At Killybegs, there is a tract of 74 acres, about a mile from the town, granted in the seventeenth century by Lord Glenside to the Corporation of Killybegs "for the use and benefit of such poor inhabitants of the village as have not lands of their own."

When the Corporation was dissolved, trustees were appointed, and this property, it is understood, has been managed in the interests of the class for whom it was intended, but there are not now within the prescribed boundary a sufficient number of qualified persons owning cows to stock it, and a few are taken from small landholders at a fee, the funds being applied to the payment of rent-charges, rates, and the expenses of herding. The common grasses thirty-six acres for ten months. Residence of five years in Killybegs is a necessary qualification.

VI.—SWEET SOCIETIES AND TRADE UNIONS.

54. The live stock generally kept by labourers in this Union, consists of goats, pigs and fowls, beef being rarely seen.

VII.—GENERAL REMARKS.

55. There are no benefit societies or trades unions organised by the labourers. A few subscribe to the Provident Assurance Company.

56. The general relations between employers and employed appear to be fairly good. Five of those who sent in returns say they are "good," two say they are "very good," one uses the word "friendly." Three others report less favourably. One says, "Not so good as formerly, labourers very independent." Another says, "Labourers are independent; relations not very friendly" while a third gives prominence in his return to the prevalence of breach of contract by hired servants, in not entering on their place, which he

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APPENDIX—continued.

RETURN FROM FOREIGN EMPLOYERS IN DOWNSHIRE UNION—continued.

		Simon Martin, Esq., J.P., Bathampton.	Dr. R. Hamilton, Esq., Bathampton.	James Marshall, Esq., Kensford.
1. Supply of labour	(a)	Not satisfactory	Not sufficient in spring time and harvest.	Hardly sufficient.
	(b)	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease.
	(c)	None	None	Considerable immigration in spring.
	(d) 1.	Fair	Quite an efficient but not so willing.	Little change.
	2.	Not up to what they were	As efficient as any other district.	Quite equal to other districts.
2. Conditions of employment	(a)	Continuous	Irregular	Regular.
	(b)	By the half year	Mainly by half year, some weekly, some daily.	Fairly regular as a rule.
	(c)	6 a.m. to 4 p.m. in summer with half hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner.	Custom, 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. in 7 parts all the year.	Fifty-four hours per week.
	1.	Winter from 6 a.m. till dark	Labourers 6 to 8 a.m. sunrise from daylight to dark in winter.	
	2.	Two and a-half hours summer	Not many women or children employed.	
	(d)	One hour on Sunday	One hour dinner.	
	(e)	—	Eleven hours summer.	
3. Wages and currency		Single men 14s. to 16s. a year, and board and fuel.	4s. to 5s. a week and board	4s. to 5s. weekly.
	(b) 1.	Married men have cottage and garden, and some, in 20s. and 10s., say 20s. in all.	No piece work.	
	2.	—	No prospect of advancement.	
	(c)	—	Wages of ordinary labourer 40s. and board.	
	(d)	—	Of a skilled man 50s. and board.	
4. Cottage accommodation	(a) 1.	Outing season	Sufficient	In winter most works.
	2.	Conveniently situated for work	Generally in the farms upon the outskirts of villages. In most cases one room and kitchen, never more than two rooms, mostly small, about 15 by 15 in the country. Much smaller in the villages, where they have a kitchen about 15 feet square, and a small apartment of two rooms. I have often seen three beds in one of these small rooms with no ventilation, the windows in most cases not opening, so that one would almost be suffocated on entering. No drainage, no water supply except spring water. A pump is the only appliance. The sanitary condition of nearly all these houses is in a deplorable state.	
	(b) 1.	Dispersed on farms.		
	(c) 1.	—		
	2.	—		
	(d)	—		
5. Gardens, allotments, &c.	(a) 1.	No gardens	About half a rood well cultivated.	
	2.	Each married man has half a rood of potatoes (Irish), seeded and laboured by me, for it.	No such thing as allotments.	
	(b)	—	Labourer gets ground for any purpose left after planting his garden.	
	(c) 1.	—	May get grass for a goat.	
	2.	—		
	(d)	—	Pigs and pigs are kept, seldom bees.	
	(e)	—		
6. Land &c.		None	—	None.
7. General relations		—	Good	Very good.
8. General condition of the agricultural labourer		—	In the past they are very comfortable, but might be better if more encouraged.	Satisfactory.

APPENDIX—continued.

Returns from Twentee Employers in Downpatrick Union—continued.

	Mr. Geo. Blackhead, Under Agent to Marquis of Downshire.	Mr. James Lamb, Land Agency Office, Castlebliss.	Mr. Wm. Hughes, Enniskillen.	Mr. Hy. McIlwain, J.P., Carragee.
1. Supply of labour	(a) Hardly sufficient (b) Decrease (c) Very few come (d) i. Efficiency ii. Retaining work	Ample Not much change None Average Ditto.	Increased Decrease None 60 per cent. inefficient Ditto.	Sufficient. About the same. None. Not so efficient.
2. Conditions of employment	(a) Regular (b) Weekly (c) i. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. In winter light to dusk. ii. One hour allowed for dinner. iii. Ten hours in summer. iv. No Sunday work	Employment regular Engagement by work 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, to 5 p.m. in winter, with light till 10 a.m. for breakfast and an hour for dinner. 10 hours summer 10 hours summer Not employed on Sunday for a part of day only.	Regular By six months 6 a.m. to twilight in winter, daylight from 7 to 8 a.m. in summer and winter. Two hours for meals Ten hours' work in summer. One fourth employed on Sunday for six hours.	Regular. Usual custom by six months, weekly with me. Summer 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; winter 7 a.m. to dusk. One hour for dinner. Ten hours in summer. On Sunday horse men only.
3. Wages and earnings	(a) About twenty-two, employed in life to the post work. (b) i. 2 s. 6 d. 10. ii. 1 s. 6 d. 10. iii. 1 s. 6 d. 10. iv. 1 s. 6 d. 10.	10s. to 15s. None 6 s. a day extra in barlins and harvest. A few are allowed oats and milk. None. Ordinary 20s. skilled 25s., shepherds 30s., with fine house and land.	12, and outlay, garden, and board. None 10s. per week and board in harvest. None Ordinary 20s. a year and board, with out lay and garden.	12, and food. None No receipt in harvest except casual. But, who get in a day and board, one more grain earnings and garden and two or three loads of potatoes also a half day occasionally, still the estimated earnings.
4. Cottage accommodation	(a) Sufficient ii. Connected to work (c) In village (d) Room, late, and stable, three rooms of about 100 sq. ft. well ventilated, kept good with oil, gas, electricity, hot-water, and privy. ii. Best fit to be of a work for cotton and garden. (d) Taken paid by landlord	No objection during the last fifteen years. Except four, all are connected to work. Condition is to repair very good. Room built and dated, from two to five rooms, good ventilation and equipment, no outlay (p. 1) all have good cellars. Held directly from owner of estate, and occupied by his labourers, some five, some 12 a week. Taken paid by landlord. Many even their own cottages and a piece of land.	Supply sufficient Connected to work Selected on farms Regular good, built of stone, and dated. Three rooms. Drain age and water-supply good. One house, jet grey, and best house. Held while in owner's employ.	Sufficient in number. Connected to work In fair state of repair Bed of stone and lime and whitened, two to three rooms. Bath, kitchen, dressing, and water supply hot, no out house. In village held, three estate cottages, in connection from the farmer, very in condition of work. Knew from 12 to 15 a week in village.
5. Gardens, allotments, &c.	(a) i. Almost one road, cultivation good. ii. No allotments (b) Potatoes grown on one road are given by farmers to men who work on the farm. (c) Pigs and poultry are kept, occasionally here.	Garden consists from 10 to 15 garden plots. Vegetables and potatoes are cultivated. There are no allotments Less than 100 yds. a plot, pig and dole.	From half an acre down The cultivation is bad. There are no allotments Less than 100 yds. a plot, pig and dole.	There are no allotments. Potatoes grown on one road are given by farmers to men who work on the farm. Pigs and poultry are kept, occasionally here.
6. and 7. Benefit societies and trades' unions.	None	None	Very small None	None None.
8. General relations	Good		Not so good as formerly; labourers very independent.	Friendly.
9. General condition of the agricultural labourers.	Generally good, and connected with their position. Outside of the estate labourers, the position of the neighbouring farmers is to give men to their labour at 10 to 12 p.m. half year, with board and lodging, or in the case of a married man living on farm, about 12 a week and food, and a few loads.	The houses and general surroundings of many small farmers who, to support themselves and families, are obliged to labour for others, are very bad indeed, and also the sanitary conditions much more defective, and improvement much needed.	Good	Their condition rather than it ever was.

APPENDIX—continued

THE
ANNALS
OF
THE
MATH. SOCIETY

3.-IV. LOCAL PATTERNS

Reprint from *Forteen Employers in Township Union*—continued[illegible]

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. MCCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

C L O N E S U N I O N
(COUNTIES OF MONAGHAN AND FERMANAGH).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEOFFREY DRAGG, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

Stk.
1. I have the honour to submit the following brief report on the supply of labour and the condition of the labourer in the Union of Clonoe, Ireland.

2. Before proceeding to the Union I communicated with the Board of Guardians, asking for their advice and co-operation, and that Board kindly convened a special meeting, at which I attended and made a statement as to the objects of the inquiry. A conversation afterwards took place, turning chiefly on the subject of labourers' cottages, which appeared to have already occupied attention at previous meetings. Some of the guardians seemed to be of opinion that a scheme for the repair of existing cottages might be adopted, if sanctioned under the Labourers (Ireland) Act.

I distributed copies of form No. 3 to seventeen guardians who were present at this meeting, some of whom afterwards returned them. (See Appendix.)

Subsequently I held an evening meeting for labourers at a school-house granted for the purpose by Canon O'Neill, parish priest of Clonoe, who attended and presided. This meeting was attended by nearly 200 labourers, several of whom volunteered statements, to which reference will be made.

3. The Union of Clonoe occupies an inland situation in the western part of the County Monaghan and the adjoining part of Fermanagh.

4. The area of the Union, according to the Ordnance Survey, is 73,592 acres, of which 27,759 acres are in County Monaghan and 45,703 in County Fermanagh, and the total poor law valuation is 57,677.

5. The population of the Union in 1851 was 20,660, and in 1891 17,836, showing a decrease in the decade of about 14 per cent. The population at present is almost equally divided between the portions of the Union in the two counties, the Monaghan portion having a unit of population to 2.1 acres, and the Fermanagh part one to 3.1 acres.

The decrease of population has gone on steadily for a long time, the Union half a century ago having supported nearly double its present numbers.

6. The character of the country varies considerably. The Monaghan side of the Union and the southern half of the Fermanagh part consist of a series of low hills, lying on limestone, with a thick bed of limestone gravel over it, and having some small lakes and a good deal of bog in the intervening valleys.

In some places there are still tracts of areas of deep bog, in other valleys it is almost exhausted, while in some parts bog land reclaimed and cultivated many years ago is again being set over for fuel, the peat being of far greater value than the arable land.

Towards the southern fringe of the Monaghan side of the Union the hills rise higher, and the limestone is replaced by slaty rocks, with a covering of boulder clay and gravel. The soil is not so good here as on the limestone, and there are a greater number of small farms.

The northern part of the Fermanagh side of the Union rests on sandstone, and is of a mountainous character, rising to upwards of 1000 feet in the elevated division of Carrumore. The soil in this district is of low quality, and the individual holdings of small value, except in a few instances at the base of the hills. This part of the Union is occupied generally by a class of tenants who require no outside labour, and there are practically no labourers in it. On the contrary, many farmers' sons emigrate from this district; some migrate to England, and some seek employment as hired servants in the lowlands.

7. The whole of the Clonoe Union is strictly agricultural in its character, there being neither mines nor fisheries within its bounds, and a very limited amount of employment for females in cottage industries, of which "crochet" is the one that appears to have taken root in this district.

8. The towns of Clonoe had a population in 1891 of 2,638, and the other towns in the Union are Newtownbutler (408), Newbliss (337), and Roslea (381), and there are some small villages, such as Benburb, Killynora, Scotchcove, and Annalee.

Clonoe is a much more important town than its population would indicate. It has the advantage of being

to some extent a centre of the railway system, being the point of junction of lines from Dublin, Belfast, Londonderry, and the West of Ireland.

It has, consequently, the best fairs for horses and cattle in the district, and it is a very large market for butter, eggs, and pork.

Besides its excellent railway accommodation, it is connected by canal with Belfast, giving additional facilities for the carriage of heavy goods. It is, indeed, a highly prosperous town, considering that its trade depends entirely on an agricultural population.

9. A considerable change appears to have taken place of late years in the system of farming in the Clonoe Union and surrounding district, much larger areas than formerly being now devoted to pasture and meadow, and there being comparatively little rotation tillage, and a very small proportion of green crops.

The chief dependence for the wintering of cattle is on hay, and consequently employment is brisker during the hay season than at any other time.

The finer limestone land yields pasture and hay of excellent quality, but much of the modern and inferior land has become rough and runty pasture, and is evidently in need of a course of restorative tillage.

The crops chiefly grown are potatoes, oats, cabbages, turneps and flax.

Spade labour is largely employed, there being little ploughing, except on some large places.

1.—SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

10. The supply of labour in the Clonoe Union appears to be sufficient for present requirements, except during the hay season and potato planting, which are the busiest seasons of the year.

Some employers complain that labour is rather scarce in their localities, while the labourers say that they experience a want of regular employment during three months of winter. Taking all the statements put before me, I think that all the best steady men have regular and nearly constant employment, and that the remainder, who may be called casual labourers, are certainly short of work during the winter, but indemnified to a large extent by the higher wages which they get during the busy seasons.

11. Under the several heads of landlords, agricultural labourers (outgoing), shepherds, indoor farm servants, and general labourers, there were, by the census of 1881, 1,291 in the Union, and 1,300 according to the census of 1891.

These numbers appear small, compared with the total population, but there are great numbers of small land holders. In the district, who not only require no outside labour, but who send out members of their families either as indoor servants or day labourers at times on the larger holdings.

It is noticeable that while, during the decade from 1881 to 1891, the total population of the Union decreased 14 per cent., the labourers, as above defined, showed a decrease of only 9.4 per cent. in the same period.

12. There is no immigration at any season, but on the contrary, some migrate during summer and harvest in search of better employment elsewhere, and there is a constant stream of emigration, both of labourers' and farmers' families, but particularly of the latter.

13. There is, as usual, some difference of opinion as to the efficiency of the labourers, compared with former times.

The decrease of numbers being due to emigration, it is likely the opinion of those who think the men not so efficient as formerly is correct, as the best men generally emigrate.

II.—CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

14. The conditions of employment vary according to the class of holding.

On residential estates and large farms, both of which are comparatively rare, men have regular and continuous employment by the year, getting a cottage, and sometimes a garden in addition to wages, and on some large places fuel also. On the medium-sized farms, where the greater part of the labourers are employed, men are engaged either as indoor servants, hired by the half year, or, if married, as a living on the farm, then by the year, but fed in the farmer's house, and generally

It—V.
Census.

Method of
farm ing.

Increase of
labourers.

Immigrants.

Emigrants.

Immigrants.

Emigrants.

E. T. CHURCH.

paying for their cottages about 1s. a week, or one day's wages.

There is, of course, also a class of casual or jobbing labourers, who are not fond of a long engagement, and are often out of employment for a time in winter.

Hours of work.

15. The usual hours of work are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., or from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer, with two hours for meals, or in some cases one hour and a-half. One gentleman says his boys are from 5.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and some variety is reported as to winter hours, but the usual time is from light to dark, except for those in charge of stock, who work somewhat longer in the short days.

At the labourers' meeting one man complained that men did not get regular or sufficient meal-times, being expected to get up and go to work immediately after finishing their food. On further inquiry this was stated to apply to specially busy seasons, and as no other man present corroborated the statement, I conclude that such a practice is not common. There does not seem to be much difference in the hours worked by different classes of labourers, or by women and young people, when employed, which is chiefly in the hay season and at potato planting.

The hours of work may be regarded as three for ten and a-half in summer, and in winter varying according to the length of daylight.

Season of work.

16. There are very few employed on Sunday, herds and barrowmen only, and that for a short time. The method of cattle-fencing, being chiefly with hay, reduces the work of a cattle man higher than where roots are used.

III.—WAGES AND ALLOWANCES.

17. Wages vary in different parts of the district, and in the same district are modified by the conditions of engagement.

Where men are paid by their employer 5s. to 6s. a week is the usual money payment, and in some cases it is reduced to 4s. during the winter quarter. On large farms and residential places 6s., 7s., and 10s. a week are paid. Mr. S. Clarke, a large farmer at Newtown-burton, says 5s. to 10s. has been the current rate for the past twelve months, without any privilege or penance. On Mr. Murray-Kor's home farm at Newbush the men get 6s. and 5s. a week, with good cottages and small gardens free.

Mrs. Thompson's man, at Ours, have 5s. a week, a free house, and a rood (Irish) of measured potato ground.

On Lord Kinn's home farm, which is just on the verge of the Union, the labourers have from 7s. to 10s. a week, with free cottage and garden, and in most cases grass for a cow and calf.

Herds have 11s. a week, and similar allowances.

At Lord Dunsyre's, in the Gosselink Union, the regular wages is 5s. a week, except for two months in winter, when it is 5s. 7d. To this the following perquisites are added: a cottage and allotment of from half an acre to a cottage, bog ground, and waste timber, also 2d. a day extra while road cutting, and 4d. extra if attending saw mill.

There are 30 men and 8 boys employed on the farm, 12 labourers in the garden, besides steward, gardener, cooper, and shepherd.

At Mr. Madden's the rate of wages is 7s. for eight months and 6s. for the remaining four, without any perquisites, but his men, I understand, are the sons of small tenants on the property, which is rather poor land.

Young men hired as indoor servants get from 12s. to 14s. a year, and a very good man 16s.

Peatwork.

18. The only employment by peatwork of which I heard was the mowing of meadows, at 7s. 6d. per Irish acre.

Haytime and harvest.

19. In haytime the current rate of wages is said to be 1s. 6d. and food, and for mowmen sometimes 2s. and food, and a somewhat similar rate prevails for a short time during the grain harvest.

Perquisites and allowances.

20. Perquisites are nearly given to the commonest form is a piece of bog ground, or half a rood of potato ground. On large residential places they are on a more liberal scale, including cottage, garden, and firewood, and in very exceptional cases a cow's grass, of which instances have been given in paragraph 17.

Peatwork in kind.

21. There are no payments in kind of the nature of those common in Scotland, but the following arrangements may be said to approach to a payment in kind—

A large farmer often has one or more holdings detached from that on which he lives. On a small holding of this class a caretaker lives, but works wherever his employer requires him, a member of his family

attending to the stock. For this he is paid by a free cottage, half an acre of potato ground, and a cow kept for him.

The Agricultural Labourer.

Employment other than agricultural.

22. Employment other than agricultural is plentiful. There is a very good quarry of limestone for building near the town of Cloness, and a freestone quarry in the northern part of the Union at Carrinure, both of which are worked at present to supply material for a church and bank building, and they are only used for local purposes.

There is barned to quite a number of places for local needs, the stone used consisting of boulders from the limestone gravel formations. This lime burning is carried on in conjunction with forestry, and now goes on a large scale, but it gives valuable employment to a number of labourers and small forgers during the slack season.

Seasonal variations in earnings.

23. The annual earnings of a labourer in this Union, as estimated by Mr. Clark, F.L.G., amount to 231 to 252. Mr. Hall, also a poor law guardian, says from 201 to 231 for an ordinary labourer, and from 231 to 252 for a ploughman.

A man hired as indoor farm servant at 141 to 161, allowing 31 for his food, would earn 231 to 251.

The labourers on Lord Kinn's estate, between wages and allowances, earn 271 to 321 a year, and herds 321 or 331, but this rate is quite exceptional, the allowance of grazing for a cow and calf being unknown on any other place, so far as I could learn, except to herds.

Men engaged at 6s. a week and their food, making some allowance for broken time, may be regarded as earning about the same as a hired man, say about 141 to 161, and 81 for food, or 231 as all.

It may, I think, be concluded that the earnings of agricultural labourers range from 201 to 251 in this Union, except in some very special cases.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

24. Such as they are, cottages are sufficient in number for present requirements, but there can be only one opinion as to the insufficiency of accommodation, the low state of repair, and the general unsatisfactory condition of many of them.

Cottages.

The normal cottage of the country is a one storey detached building, with earthen floors and no back door, and containing a kitchen and one sleeping room, sometimes a kitchen and two rooms.

Where the situation is dry, the roof perfect, and the interior clean and well finished, this is sometimes a very cosy little dwelling, but where the roof is neglected, as often happens, and where little attention is paid to cleanliness, and particularly where the bedding is bad, it is difficult to describe the discomfort of the place.

Mr. Maguire, F.L.G. for the Division of Carrick, makes the following statement as to the labourers' cottages in his district:—"The houses are, without exception, extremely miserable, consisting at best one room, in which the whole family have to sleep, and a kitchen, badly ventilated except as in other cases, by holes through the roof, and generally in the most unhealthy situation."

Doctor Fitzgibbon, of the Newtownbutler district, says:—"Their houses are hovels, their families large, squalid, and filthy; no attempt at cleanliness; there is no idea of thrift; an entire want of enterprise. Something seems needed to reorganize the program."

These very strong statements are no exaggeration of the state of things in the less favoured parts of the Union, and I visited cottages in the localities indicated which were simply deplorable, but there are exceptions, to which I may briefly refer. At Newbush, a village belonging to the Murray-Kor estate, a number of comfortable cottages, with small gardens attached, are provided for the workmen at the home farm, and at Ballinure, in the same neighbourhood, the Rev. Mr. Moore-Powder has also good modern cottages for his labourers and tradesmen. There are two substantial cottages on the farm of Mrs. Thompson, at Ours, and some of a similar class on one of Mr. Jackson's farms.

New cottages at Cloness.

25. The best cottages in the Union are, however, two new blocks near the railway station at Cloness, recently built by Mr. Carson, which present a marked contrast to the waxy old and unsatisfactory tenements about the outskirts of the town. This very neat cottage property consists of two rows, with main cottages in each row, one block being two full stories high, the other a story and a half, the upper rooms being over-railed and lighted from the roof. Each cottage has three apartments besides the kitchen and a back door leads to the

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER

THE
HUT OF
LORD'S
COTTAGE

THE
HUT OF
LORD'S
COTTAGE

Distance
from work.

Size of
lot in
acreage
and
size of
cottage

Materials of
cottage.

Ventilation
and
drainage

Water
supply.

Out houses.

Ownership
and tenure.

Rates.

yard, which, though small, has a v.c. and excellent drainage, and there is a small piece of garden ground attached to each.

These are the only cottages, so far as I saw, in the Union, in the erection of which drainage and sanitary accommodation have been thoroughly attended to.

They are occupied by highway servants and others a little better off than farm labourers, who pay for the larger houses 12s. 6d., and for the smaller 2s. a week.

18. Outside of the Union, but close to the boundary, I visited a lot of excellent cottages in the residential estate of Lord New.

Some of these are too large and too costly to serve as models for the ordinary cottage builder, but others, more recently erected, are of more moderate dimensions, containing kitchen, three bedrooms, and parlor, and all have good out-offices and sanitary arrangements.

17. I also visited 18 cottages on the estate of Lord Darnley, in the neighbouring Union of Galloway, and found them, as I was led to expect, comfortable and well kept.

They contain three, four, and in some cases five apartments, with separate out-offices and sanitary arrangements, and a garden allotment of at least half an acre is attached to each cottage.

16. As regards distance from work, the cottages in the Cloness Union and the neighbouring districts appear to be fairly situated. Some of them are in villages and hamlets, while others are dispersed over the farms; but as the villages are generally small, men have not often to travel too far to their work.

15. The state of repair of most of them is poor, and many are in the wretched condition described in a preceding paragraph.

At the end of the otherwise neat town of Newtown-bulder there is a very bad and unsanitary block of cottages called "Becky Row." At "Pond Hill," Cloness, they are also very bad and in keps, and at the village of Scoonhouse and at Stronbridge they are no better.

At Scoonhouse and in the neighbourhood I noted the dimensions of some of the cottages. One contained two apartments, 12 ft. by 10 ft. and 12 ft. by 8 ft.; another, also two apartments, 12 ft. by 10 ft. and 12 ft. by 7 ft., and several others appear similar in size.

During another drive I saw two houses containing only one apartment each. One of them, 15 ft. by 9 ft. had only one occupant, the other had been a few days vacated by a man his wife, and four of a family. Its dimensions were 15 ft. by 12 ft., and it had been re-let to a single woman.

10. These old and poor cottages are generally thatched, either with straw or rushes, and are for the most part built of stone, in some cases partly of clay. The modern cottages are built of stone and lime, and slated.

11. Ventilation and drainage have not been attended to except in rare cases.

In low damp situations an open drain is sometimes found, but in ordinary situations there is no attempt at drainage, and where no back-door is provided, which is a very common state of affairs, the sanitary condition of the front of the cottage is often very bad.

12. There is a good natural water supply over the Union generally, springs being abundant.

13. Out-houses are either wanting, or of a temporary description, in the greater number of cases; a shelter for a pig or fowls being constructed at the end of the cottage by the labourer himself.

14. In the country districts the cottages are the property of the farmer, or almost all cases; in the villages they belong to the estate owner or to a middleman. I saw one case in the Union in which a labourer had acquired a site in the country, and had built a snug cottage, but he had no land except that on which the cottage stood. Some cottages are given as a perquisite or as part of wages, but in the greater number of cases they are rented, and a very common payment is a day's work in the week, i.e., a day's work of a man who boards in his employer's house, or 1s. a week. Some cottages of a very low class are let at 8s. and 10s. a week, while in the towns and villages higher rents are obtained even for very bad cottages, sometimes as much as 2s. a week being paid for one scarcely habitable.

Gardens where they are small, are usually let with the cottage, but when of good size, they often have a separate rent put on them.

15. Rates, which are moderate in this Union, are in all cases paid by the owner of the cottage, county cess in some cases by the tenant.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

16. Many of the cottages in this, as in other districts of the North of Ireland, have no gardens attached to

them; a considerable number have gardens of very small size, varying from a few patches to half a rood, while a small proportion have gardens of good size, generally on reclaimed bog. These large gardens are sometimes held by a separate tenant from the cottage, and at very high rents. Thus, John Kelly, at the labourers' meeting, and he paid 11 lbs. a year for about a rood of bog, equal to 1 rood 24 perches of estate. Philip Fitzpatrick said he paid 12s. a year for a smaller area, and I saw similar cases when travelling over the Union.

The occupants of three cottages of fair quality have about a statute acre of garden ground divided between them, and have the privilege of cutting turf on an adjoining bog, for all of which they pay 4s. each per annum, or about 1s. each for garden, or at the rate of 3s. an acre.

Several noblemen and gentlemen give the labourers on their home farms garden allotments varying from a rood to half an acre or more, but the position is confined to persons of that class, most of the farmers charging rent for the cottages and gardens on their farms.

Potatoes and cabbage are the principal crops grown, and in some cases peas and beans.

17. On many farms, potato grounds are manured are given at the rate of 8s. per Irish acre, or if the labourer is able to manure it himself, he gets from half a rood to a rood free, according to agreement. Residents in villages take potato ground from farmers on both systems, and according to one authority pay 2s. 10s. a rood manured, and 1s. 6s. manuring it themselves.

18. There are, as a rule, no cow pastures, very few labourers owning a cow, the exceptions being herds on large farms, and the labourers on the home farm of one noblemen.

19. A good many of the more thrifty labourers feed pigs; some keep goats where they are permitted, and poultry are almost universally kept. Bees, on the contrary, are rarely seen.

VI.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

20. The general relations between employers and labourers are said to be amicable. There may be a little friction in the latter seasons, but those who are amicable to their men are highly respected, and get the pick of the casual labourers when they want them.

VII.—GENERAL COMMENTS.

21. The condition of the agricultural labourer in the Cloness district cannot be said to be altogether satisfactory. As regards his means of subsistence, the regular, steady-going labourer, who is willing to take the current wages of the country, is constant employment, may be said to be fairly well off, except while his family are under age, the very low price of their enabling him to live better on his moderate wages than he could at any previous time.

There is not, however, sufficient employment during winter for all the present population, and the casual labourer must, I think, be rather pinched at times. Several men of this class informed me that they got very little employment during two or three months of the winter, but it may be observed that these casual workers decline steady employment at what they consider low wages, preferring to work hard during the busy season at a higher rate, and they are therefore the first to lose work during the slack season.

One large employer, says labourers in his neighbourhood are better off than the small farmers, of course referring to the labourers in constant employment. Another witness, who ought to be well informed, says the labourers in the same neighbourhood are wretchedly poor, referring, I take it, to the casual labourers, while a third says, "It is surprising how they are able to live for weeks, and sometimes for months, and no work."

It is, however, well known that the village shopkeeper, who is generally a farmer as well, often gives credit to this class of labourer, and thus secures the first offer of his services in the busy season, and his earnings when he is employed. If a man of this class is thrifty when well employed he often feeds pigs, which form a bank, where the savings of the summer and harvest go, and on this, and the produce of poultry, with a little help from the shopkeeper in case of need, or perhaps a little money from America, he will pull through the winter on very small earnings, and when the spring work opens the demand for his labour enables him to earn much higher wages than the regular yearly labourer.

D—E,
CLONESS

Potato
grounds.

Cow
pastures.

Low stock.

R. F.
GROVER

The great grievance of the labourer in this and many other Unions in the North of Ireland is his poor house accommodation. It would be difficult to exaggerate the bad condition of the cottages in which many of the labourers live, and some of the small landholders are no better lodged, but at present there is little prospect of amendment.

Serious depression at present exists among the farming community, both in grazing and tillage districts. More cattle and sheep have been practically unsaleable, except at unusually low prices, and grain is very cheap, and a large proportion of it badly sown.

Under these circumstances, many farmers can't pay their rent and other demands out of the year's earnings, and, where they have not capital to fall back on, will be hardly pressed during the coming year.

Added to this there is, as I mentioned in a former report, a feeling existing very generally in the North of Ireland antagonistic to the Labourers' Acts, which many farmers think would establish a new order of labourers capable of controlling the situation.

Farmers who employ much labour would naturally prefer to keep the control of the cottages on their own land, and they would therefore more readily fall in with a scheme under which money for cottage building would be advanced to them on similar terms to that advanced to the guardians under the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts.

Providing the materials, and working in spare time, and employing local labour, a farmer can build at a much cheaper rate than a contractor, and the professional expenses would be much lower under such a scheme than under the Labourers' Acts.

For these reasons, if it is taken into consideration, whether loans could be given to farmers at a low rate of interest, for building cottages, as this seems the readiest

way to improve the housing of the agricultural labourer in the north of Ireland.

Before concluding, I may refer to the scarcity of employment for females in the Cloness Union and the adjoining districts, there being no factories of any sort, and a very slight development of cottage industries.

The shirt and under-clothing manufacturers, which, in some districts further north employ a large proportion of the female population, has not been introduced here; crabs-work is the only home industry of which I heard, and even this is said to be declining, and, I am told, gives only precarious employment to a limited number of girls, at wages much less than they formerly earned.

There is but little employment for girls in the fields, except during the hay harvest and potato gathering, and domestic service is consequently the principal resource of a large number, and their wages do not run so high as in districts where there is a greater choice of employment.

The poor-rate in the Cloness Union is very moderate, having averaged during the year 1891, about 7½d., and during the year 1892, about 7d., in the pound over the entire Union. This indicates a very constant administration, as regards out-door relief, and the very strong distribution of the poor to go to the Union, except in the last extremity.

Comparing Cloness with the Unions which I have previously visited, the general condition of the agricultural labourer compares favourably with that ofully-hampton, but unfavourably with Ardes and Cookstown, while it is far behind Downpatrick, and other Unions in that district of country, where a greater variety of industries exists.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) H. MCCREA,

(Assistant Commissioner).

APPENDIX 1.

RETURN FROM SEVEN EMPLOYERS IN THE CLONESS UNION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

		Mr. GERRARD, Cloness, Northdownshire	Mr. KERRAN, Rossmore.	Mr. M. HALL, Northdown.
1. Supply of labour	(a)	Fully sufficient	Almost sufficient	Believable.
	(b)	Short the same	Not much difference	Excessive
	(c)	None	None	No immigration.
	(d)	About the same	Some going away in harvest	Quite at goal; better than in other districts.
2. Conditions of employment	(a)	Mostly regular	Regular	Mostly regular
	(b)	Various	Generally by the half year	By the week
	(c)	Days to 4 p.m. summer, slows to dark up winter. Mail boys, one and a half to two hours. No housework.	From 7 a.m. till 7 p.m. in summer, No Sunday work.	8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, light to dark in winter. Few extra days engaged. Mail boys, two hours. Ten hours' work in winter.
3. Wages and earnings	(a)	1s. to 1½s.	10s. to 12s. per half year, with food	10s. to 12s.
	(b)	No piece-work		No piece-work
	(c)	Caretakers and labour, the night of a cow, five horses, 10 milking, and 10 potato ground. Annual earnings 10s. to 12s.	No piecework, except cowmen a piece of land for potatoes.	No change in laytime or harvest to regular men. Cows 10s. to 12s. No potatoes. Annual earnings 10s. to 12s., potatoes 10s. to 12s. In the village the houses are good.
4. Cottage accommodation	(a)	Quite sufficient	Not so many as formerly	
	(b)	Insufficient	Labourers live generally with the farmer	
	(c)	Mostly convenient		
	(d)	1. Bad. 2. Generally good. Work on stone, distended or distal. Two to four rooms, three common. Good drainage and wells. Pigeons, few hens, &c. Generally made by tenant farmer. 12d. to 1s. 6d. in one day's work in week. Rates paid by the farmer.	Materials, stone and plaster. No construction. Building—two rooms, about 12 feet square. Drainage bad, water supply good, but many not houses. Potatoes weekly. Field from the tenant farmer. Rent 10s. a year, watered by waterworks. Rates paid by the farmer.	Stone and lime, some slated some thatched. Two rooms, 12 ft. by 12 ft., 12 ft. by 12 ft. and 12 ft. by 12 ft. Most of the village rented from estate owner, a few from independent owners. Field by weekly tenant, annual rent 1s. a week. No cottages owned by labourers. Rates paid by tenant.
5. Gardens, allotments, &c.		Gardens use of various crops. The cultivation poor generally. Potatoes ground are down half a road in one good Irish, sometimes two. If necessary are changed by at rate of 12s. per row (Irish). Herbs get a row's work free. Also stock, pigs and poultry.	Gardens are generally about half a row. The crops grown are potatoes and cabbage. Livestock kept, goats.	Gardens about half a row. Potatoes ground are taken by the tenant in the winter at 10s. per Irish acre sown. A cow's piece out of 10s. per acre, mostly, 12s. some some pigs and poultry, nearly a row.
6 and 7. Benefit societies and trades' unions		None		None.
8. General relations		Good		Good.
9. General conditions		Better than many of the small farmers.		Depressed, owing chiefly to the low prices for cattle and bad crops.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

APPENDIX 2.

STATEMENTS AT MEETING OF LABOURERS

Pat McDeenagh said, "I am a general labourer. I pay 1s. a week for a very bad thatched house of two apartments. I have no out-house, and no garden.

"I get 1s. a day and my food, i.e. 4d. a day and food when mowing, and down to 8d. and food in winter.

"I am employed about nine months."

Thomas McKee said, "I have a cottage, garden, and bog ground for herding a small farm. I get 1s. a day and my food for about nine months. I get 1s. 6d. and my food while mowing."

John Kelly said, "I pay a 1s. a week for a thatched cottage with a kitchen and two rooms, and 11. 10s. a year for a road (drish) of garden. I get 2s. a day, and support myself in the busy season, and 1s. 6d. in winter. Turf ground costs me 11. 18s. a year."

Patrick McDermott said, "I got a cottage of two apartments, a road of bog tillage, and a day's cutting of turf for herding a small farm of ten acres. I work for the same farmer round the year at 1s. a day and my food. If a wet day comes I am not paid.

"The regular hours are from half-past six in the morning till half-past six in the evening, but I have to be up earlier than that. I don't get regular meal times. There is a bell rung in a large place near us. Half-an-hour is given for breakfast, and an hour for dinner."

Philip Mangan said, "I pay 1s. a week for a cottage of two small apartments, and three days' cutting of turf. I pay 11. a year for a garden of a road (drish).

"I earn 10d. a day and my food for eight months, and 8d. for the other four months."

Pat Doyle said, "I got 10d. a day and my food round the year, and I pay a day's work for my house.

"I had 7s. a week, and a free house before I came here."

Patrick Cassidy said, "I give a day in the week for a very bad house of two apartments, there is no garden. I get 1s. a day and my food, and I get a lot of potato ground, about half a road (drish)."

Note.—There are no benefit societies or trades' union in the district.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. MCCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF LETTERKENNY
(CO. DONEGAL).

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Return from Fourteen Employers.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEORGEY DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour

INTRODUCTION.

Georgey House, Strabane,
January, 1893.

1. I have the honour to submit to the Royal Commission the following Report on the supply of labour, and the condition of the labourer in the Union of Letterkenny, Ireland.

2. Before going to the union I communicated with the board of members, inviting their co-operation, and on the 19th December I attended at their Weekly meeting, explained the objects of the inquiry, and distributed copies of Form No. 3 to the members of the board, from whom, and from the clerk of the union, I received much information.

I afterwards travelled over the union, except the more mountainous parts, conversing at various places with the clergy, gentry, farmers, and labourers, and distributing forms to any employers who were willing to fill them. A selection from their returns and from those of the guardians has been placed in an appendix.

3. The union of Letterkenny occupies a central position in the county of Donegal, being bounded on the north by the unions of Milford and Londonderry, on the east by the Strabane Union, on the south by Strabane, and on the west by Dungannon and Glenties.

The union is intersected by the River Swilly, which flows east and afterwards north-east to Letterkenny, near which town it becomes tidal and navigable for small vessels of the collier class.

A few miles further north this river widens out into Lough Swilly, one of the finest anchorages in the kingdom, but it is navigable by small vessels only to any point in this union.

4. The rock formation of the district shows considerable variety.

The mountainous country in the extreme western part of the union, forms part of the granite region of Donegal, and is flanked to the eastward by a variety of rocks, chiefly mica schist, granite, and other metamorphic strata, with occasional dykes and intrusive sheets of an igneous character, such as basalt and diorite.

In the eastern part of the union, dykes of limestone appear at Lisnaghney, Raghmogh, and Ballybrook, and run in a south-easterly direction into the union of Strabane, and to the south into the union of Stranorlar, where they widen out into an extensive field of limestone. All these formations, except the granite, are covered by a deep bed of drift gravel, and gravelly clay, which rises to a considerable height in the hills, and forms a soil of various fertility.

The limestone formation of this district is not only of interest geologically, but of considerable value from an economic point of view, as it affords an abundant supply of lime for local purposes, and sends a large quantity to the city of Londonderry and its vicinity, where there is no local supply.

5. The area of the Letterkenny union is 108,247 acres, and the total poor-law valuation 31,661. The population of the union in 1881 was 15,071. In 1891, 18,365.

6. The quality of the soil is as various as the geological formation.

For the purpose of a somewhat fuller description of its character, it may be divided into the three medical districts, of which Church Hill, Letterkenny, and Masser Cunningham respectively form the centres.

The western or Church Hill district, comprising six electoral divisions, has an area of 60,128 acres, and a valuation of only 5,076, with a population, according to the census of 1891, of 4,662.

As these figures indicate, this is a very poor, mountainous district, a large proportion of which is absolutely wild mountain, of nominal value, and the remainder capable land of low quality, most of which has

been reclaimed from heath. The holdings are chiefly of small value, and very few of them require any outside labour, the occupier's family being able to do the work, and some of them going elsewhere to seek employment. These are consequently very few labourers in this district.

The second, or Letterkenny district, comprises five electoral divisions, of which Castleway, Letterkenny, and Ballymacool are the best, and Carravally and Gortreeva are the poorest. The area of this district is 23,440 acres, and its valuation 12,822, or, deducting the valuation of the town, 10,103. This division has a population of 6,885, or, deducting 2,330, the population of Letterkenny town, the rural population is 4,555.

There are in this district of the union some more well-wooded residential places, lying chiefly along the river and estuary, having good land and good cultivation, and there are some good farms, some the town, less further back the hills are high and bare, and there is a good deal of second and third class land.

The third and best agricultural district in the union, is that of Masser Cunningham, comprising three electoral divisions, with an area of 18,619 acres, and a valuation amounting to 10,822. Some portions of this district lie rather high and are very hilly, but it is nearly all arable, its northern part, running by Drumadagh, Pook, and Masser Cunningham to the boundary of the Londonderry Union, near the village of Newtown Coughlin, is a very rich sort of tillage land, and would compare favourably as to cultivation with most parts of Ireland.

The eastern side of the union, in which the Masser Cunningham district lies, is the barony of Raphoe, the western side in the barony of Kilmaine.

7. According to the *Jurors' lists*, there are in the Baroque side of the union 15 holdings rated between 1000 and 4000, and 66 rated between 400 and 1000, while in the portion in the barony of Kilmaine, which is economically larger, there are nine ratings between 1000 and 1000 and 32 between 400 and 1000.

The average size of the farms is thus seen to be much larger in the eastern than in the western part of the union, and there are, therefore, a much greater number of labourers in the eastern side.

8. According to the census returns of 1881, there were in the Letterkenny Union 1,877 farmers and graziers, and 693 sons, brothers, and other male relatives over 20 years of age, residing with them. In 1891 these classes had decreased to 1,841 farmers, &c., and 609 relatives over the age of 20.

9. In the same decade, according to the same returns, the united numbers of farm labourers, agricultural labourers (cottagers), shepherds, labour farm servants, and general labourers, fell from 1,355 to 883, showing the remarkable decrease of 37 per cent.

Comparing the number of labourers with the number of agricultural holdings, it is manifest that labourers are employed only on a small proportion of the farms, and this point was also arrived at when travelling over the union, there being large districts of the higher lying arable country where there are very few resident labourers, except about, scotch mills, and where the few fully-stocked landholders depend entirely on indoor hired men.

Notwithstanding this serious falling off in the number of resident labourers, the larger farmers in the eastern part of the district nearly all say there is a sufficient supply of labour in their localities, with the assistance of some migratory labour in harvest, while some who live in the southern and western side say they have difficulty in getting labour; in fact, it is not there.

10. The union is essentially a tillage country, so far as the land is capable of tillage, nearly all the waste peat, even to high elevations, being cultivated, with the exception of some demesnes.

On all the better holdings a more or less regular rotation is maintained, extending over six or seven years, and including two or three years pasture.

H—VI.
LETTER-
KENNY.

Area of
Union.

Number of
Farmers.

Number of
Labourers.

Method of
Cultivation.

N.—VI.
LABOURERS.

The chief crops grown are oats, flax, turnips, potatoes, and clover hay, and to a limited extent cabbages, mangolds, and wheat. The eastern part of the union formerly produced a good deal of wheat, but its growth is being gradually abandoned, the price having become very low.

The area under flax has also fallen considerably, owing to the same cause, and for the additional reason that the outlay on this crop far exceeds that on any other. From the time flax is ready for harvesting until it is taken to market the outlay per statute acre may be estimated, for a good crop, at 4*l.*, about 20 days labour, worth at least 2*l.* being expended per acre, before it leaves the farm, in pulling, carting to and from the ponds, spreading, lifting, sunning, and stacking, and about a similar amount being paid to the scutch millowner, for, say, 5 cwt. of clean flax, at 8*s.* per cwt.

The larger farmers, who are to some extent dependent on highly paid extra labour in harvest, have almost given up growing flax of late years, but the crop is occasionally adapted to the case of the small farmer with a strong family, and men of this class, and scutch millowners, often take land in connection for growing flax.

On most of the large farms winter beef is fed, on smaller places more attention is paid to bacon-making and the rearing of young cattle.

Very sheep are kept except on the mountainous tracts, which are stocked with the horned breed.

The chief resource of the small farmer near the mountains is in pig feeding, for which he depends largely on the potato crop, assisted by scraps purchased from food.

English
most often
than any
other.

11. Of employments, other than agricultural, flax scutching is the most general over the hillage part of the union, but for the reasons stated in the last paragraph it is not so brisk as formerly.

From 55 to 30 years ago, when flax growing was a very lucrative industry, the number of scutch mills was greatly extended, but owing to the smaller average now grown scutching does not now continue more than half the year, and the hands are available for farmwork during the summer.

Lime burning gives some employment to the neighbourhood of Moncremington, the output amounting to 3,000 or 4,000 tons per annum.

Beds of graphite have been found in the neighbourhood of Church Hill, and an expert trade started in this mineral, which is the soap-stone of commerce, but as yet it is in the infancy.

English
most often
than any
other.

12. A much more important industry is the shirt manufacture, which has its headquarters at Londonderry, with branches and agencies everywhere in the surrounding country. One of these branches was started in Letterkenny town about eight years ago, and is now employing about 300 girls, 90 of whom are engaged at machine work in the factory, and the remainder at their own homes, finishing the goods by hand.

Another Londonderry firm, until recently, had an agency here for worst making, but owing, I understand, to the dulness of trade they are not giving employment in this line at present.

Stocking knitting by hand is carried on at Seaser, near the head of Glenties, where it was introduced many years ago by Mr. McFadden, J.P., and although the individual earnings are small the business is very useful in the poorer parts of the country, where there is not much other employment for females.

The headquarters of the knitting manufacture in county Donegal is at Glenties, where it is very largely developed, having agencies or depots for the distribution and collection of goods in the surrounding towns and villages.

L.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

13. The supply of labour, over the greater part of the union appears to correspond pretty well with the demand, while in some limited districts there seems to be rather a scarcity of men.

Mr. Portenfield says the supply is "abundant." Mr. Thompson states that there is "plenty," and Mr. McGovern says that the supply is "more than sufficient."

Messrs. Green, Gallagher, White, Kincaid, Swenson, Russell, Galloway, and McKelvey, concur in stating that there is a sufficient supply in their localities, while Mr. McFadden says the supply is "limited." Mr.

Robinson says it is "not enough," and Mr. Coltham that it is "not sufficient."

These three gentlemen all live on the western side of the Strilly, where the demand for labour is not so great as on the eastern side, and where the supply of cottages is smaller.

In Mr. McFadden's case I think he would be almost the sole employer of labour in his immediate neighbourhood, and dependent for its supply on small landholders and their families, as there is, strictly speaking, no class of agricultural labourers in the vicinity.

Mr. Robinson, I understood, depended largely on the families of small tenants on General Stewart's estate, there being only three labourers' cottages on this large home farm and demesne.

Mr. Coltham lives in a district where the holdings are of medium or small size, and where cottages are scarce and poor, and indoor labourers commonly employed. It is noticeable in Mr. Coltham's report that he emphasizes the fact that "in harvest labourers cannot be got at any price," while Mr. McKelvey states that "in harvest the extra demand is supplied from West Donegal, wages being as high as 1*s.* 6*d.* a day "with board and lodging, for the time spent in reaping."

14. The decrease in the number of labourers during the decade, from 1881 to 1891, was rather startling.

In the former year, as already stated, the whole number of male labourers, over 20 years of age was returned at 1,245, while the same classes in 1891 numbered only 833. This decrease is the result of emigration and removals to England and Scotland, and it is plain that if this trend is continued there must soon be a decided scarcity of labour.

15. Besides the constant supply of domestic servants, both male and female, coming from West Donegal into this union and other adjoining districts, there is a good deal of migration in summer and harvest, and as the western men pass through as cattle to Scotland or England, some of them take employment here.

They secure good wages during harvest, and generally return home in time to secure their own crops, which are later.

16. As usual, there are differences of opinion as to the efficiency of the labourers, some employers expressing themselves in the following terms—"Quite efficient," "Efficiency improved, very superior," "Generally efficiently better than formerly, and better than most other districts."

Others say, "Equal to former times," "Fairly good," "Not very efficient," "One third efficient, two thirds deficient," while two others give even more favourable accounts, one expressing the opinion that it "re-quires two men to do the work of one man 20 years ago," and the other says, "Efficiency not the one half."

On comparing these statements with my inspection notes I find that in all cases where the reports speak well of the efficiency of the labourers, the men have cottages on the farms where they work, and it is reasonable that, under these circumstances, they should be more efficient than men who have to come a considerable distance; besides, those who grow cottages and other perquisites probably get a selection of the men.

II.—COTTAGES OR HOMESTEADS.

17. Engagements are made for various periods. A good many men are engaged by the year, at regular wages, with cottages, garden, and potato ground added, and these men often remain a long time on the same farm.

Others engage by the half-year, boarding in the employer's house, but lodging in their own cottages, for which some of them pay rent, while others hold it as part of their bargain. Both these classes are paid weekly.

A third class consists of casual labourers, working for a day, a week, or longer for any one who wants them. When with a large farmer these men generally board at home, when with a small farmer they are fed by him.

There is also the class of indoor farm men and boys, engaged by the half-year, and boarded and lodged in the employer's house.

Numbers of boys and girls come from the western part of Donegal to the half-yearly hiring markets in Letterkenny, commencing while very young, and being generally accompanied, while under age, by the father.

THE
ABSTRACT
OF THE
LABOURERS.Increase or
decrease.Immigra-
tion.

Efficiency.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.A.—VI.
LEWIS-
KERRY.Estimated
annual
earnings.

or mother, who makes the agreement and returns at the following term time to re-engage the young people, and to receive part of their earnings.

Many of these young people go into the counties of Londonderry and Tyrone as indoor servants on the smaller farms, where there is a constant demand for their services, and they often settle in these counties, filling the places vacated by the emigration of the native population.

With such a supply to fall back on, as these "emerged districts" afford, there seems no danger of any permanent want of labour in the Lethbrunken Union or the adjacent country.

Hours of
work.

18. There is a good deal of diversity in the hours worked in this district.

The shortest working day as reported by Mr. Grove, of Castlegrove, a resident proprietor in the union, whose men work from seven in the morning till six in the evening, with an hour and quarter for dinner, making the working day in summer nine hours and three quarters.

Messrs. White, Robinson, Colburn, Thompson, Stevenson, and Rasmussen state their working day to be 10 hours. Mr. McKinlay says 10½ hours, Messrs. Kinross and Montgomery 10½ hours, Messrs. Gallagher, Porterfield, Conley, and McFadden say 11 hours' work.

Sunday
work.

19. The proportion of men employed on Sunday varies from one in five to one in three, sometimes being only required for a short time, and cattle men for about three hours, food being generally prepared on Saturday.

On large places men often take the stable work for one another on Sunday, and a similar arrangement is sometimes made for cattle men to enable them to go to church on alternate Sundays.

Women and
children.

20. Women and children are little employed except at summer work, when their hours are the same as those of general labourers.

Turnip lifting is given to women in winter as 6s to 7s an acre.

III.—WAGES AND RENTING.

21. The current rate of wages for men regularly employed round the year is 8s. to 9s. a week, with some variations; in some few cases only 7s., and in a few others, chiefly women, 10s.

The rate most commonly prevailing on large farms is 9s. a week, with a free cottage, a roof of potato land (Luningham measure), and sometimes a bit of garden ground.

A good many farmers feed their men, giving 6s and sometimes 7s with cottage and potato ground. The usual custom is that the labourer sows the potato ground, which he can do well, if he keeps a pig, with the assistance of road droppings gathered by the children, and sometimes of draft cow-weld, if he lives near the estuary.

Some farmers, however, prefer to measure and plant a roof of potatoes for their men, so as to ensure its condition being uniform with the remainder of the field, but the practice is not very common.

One farmer told me he gives his ploughman 8s. 6d a week, a free cottage, one gallon of sweet milk, and two gallons of buttermilk weekly, and manures and calve-weld for him one roof of potatoes.

Where no perquisites are given, or where rent is charged for the cottage, a somewhat higher rate of wages is given, and where a labourer does not live on the farm where he works, he gets 10s. or 10s. 6d a week, and sometimes a little more.

Casual labourers during harvest are paid from 12s to 14s a week, with board and lodgings.

Two-work.

22. Employment by two-work is not very common, and, so far as I learned, is given chiefly at clearing, ditching, quarrying, turnip-lifting, "hunting," and in some cases at cutting sand and sets with the scythe, and at sub-soiling waste land.

On one large place I saw a man trimming hedges at 3d per Cunningham perch, and painting of wire fences and gates 1s let out on the same place.

Draining varies in price according to the character of the soil, from 6d to 1s 2d per perch, digging from 1s 6d to 1s 8d, quarrying about 1s 9d per ton of stones, and "hunting" 5d 6d an acre. Hay is cut for 5s, an acre, and sets cut and bound for 10s to 12s.

"Hunting" is a sort of partial trenching with the spade, on which great reliance is placed for preserving

the productive power of clay soils. It consists in digging every eighth or tenth furrow during the ploughing of grass land, and scattering the bottom soil over the ploughed land.

Turnip-lifting costs 6s, sometimes more.

23. Mr. Porterfield states the annual earnings of an ordinary labourer to be 231 8s., those of men "skilled in special departments," 332 16s., and of men in charge of horses, cattle, &c., 321 8s.

Mr. White states the earnings of a labourer at 30s., and those of a shepherd at 40s.

Mr. Kinross says 281. for a good man, and 261. to 281. for a man in charge of horses and cattle.

Mr. Stevenson says 281. and sets out the items thus, wages, 224 8s.; cottage, 21 12s.; potato land, 21, total, 266 8s.

Mr. Montgomery gives 251.

The largest set forth in paragraph 21 would sum up thus: wages, at 8s. 6d a week, 221 2s.; cottage, 21 6s.; milk, 21 12s.; potatoes, 41; total, 304; or if the cottage were rated at 1s a week, the total would be 311 6s.

Young men listed as indoor servants get from 4s to 8s., and in the case of an experienced man 9s. per half year; say the yearly wages in 281, board and lodging 8s. or 10s., total 291, or if his wages were 16s., then his total earnings would be 251.

From all these data, I am inclined to estimate the earnings of an ordinary labourer in the Lethbrunken Union at from 232 to 252, and those of a superior man at 282 to 302.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

24. In respect of number, the cottage accommodation is sufficient for the labourers now residing in the union. As compared with the past their number is much reduced, many of the old cottages having fallen when they became unoccupied. As regards distance from work, the cottages appear to be in general well enough distributed, some being in villages and hamlets, but a considerable number also dispersed over the larger farms.

As to construction and state of repair, many of them are very bad. The old cottages were poorly built of stone and lime, and they generally contain two rather poor apartments, with an open thatched roof, and clay floor, but frequently they contain only one rough apartment. Their sanitary condition is generally low, and some of them, judged by any proper standard, are not fit for human habitation.

At Oldtown, Coolbor, Ednamann, Dromore, Drumaghilly, Ray, and many other places throughout the union, and even in the town of Lethbrunken, specimens of these old, dilapidated, and very unsanitary dwellings may be seen quite unfit for repairing. In Oldtown the most wretched kind of one-roomed cottages 14s for one shilling a week, and say with two apartments, however small and poor, for 1s. 6d.

25. Very few modern cottages appear to have been built in the Lethbrunken Union, and some of them show but little improvement on the pattern of the ancient cottages of two apartments, the chief change being the slated roof.

There are a few exceptions, and some of conspicuous merit, the best being a block of four excellent substantial cottages, the property of Mr. W. H. Boyd, D.L., of Ballycassid, at the end of the town of Lethbrunken, standing on about an acre of land.

These are two stories high, and measure about 23x16, with a pavement at the back 15x8, slated down from the eaves, and forming a pantry and scullery.

In the body of the house, there are a small hall, kitchen and bedroom below, and two bedrooms above stairs. Outside there is a piggery, fowl-house, and sanitary arrangements, and these premises with about thirty perches of garden, are let to Mr. Boyd's labourers at 2s. a week each, a very moderate rent considering the excellence of the accommodation.

When at Bansteele, a town in the Milford Union, about two miles outside the boundary of the Lethbrunken Union, I saw a block of ten cottages recently built by Mr. George H. White, J.P., on a somewhat similar plan. These measure 22x16, are two stories high, and have a lie-to at the back, six feet wide, forming a scullery and store for coal, and sanitary arrangements in the yard, but the rent has been fixed at 6s a year, or about 2s 6d a week, and only about half of them have been let.

New cot-
tages are
in the
union and
near
Ballycassid.

E.—VL.
LATTER
CRASY

There are two tolerably good slated cottages at Ardaraun, one good one on the farm of Phantassie, two at Boyoughy, and a few at the village of Plunk, but there is no particular want about any of them.

In the reports which are appended some employers speak in terms of qualified approval of the condition of the cottages, while others candidly admit that they are generally bad, and one report says, "The houses in most places would require to be rebuilt," which is precisely my own opinion as to the greater number of them.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

26. Gardens are not very generally attached to the cottages in this district.

They vary in size from a few perches to about half a rood, and a few extend to a rood. One gentleman in an adjoining union, says they extend to half an acre there, but I saw no labourer's garden of that class in the Letterkenny Union. Potatoes and cabbages are the usual crops, with sometimes cucumbers.

There are no allotments.

27. Potato-grounds are generally given to men who live on the farm, the usual quantity being one rood, Cunningham remarks, equal to a rood and 12 perches statute, but some farmers are more liberal, and give as much as the labourer can measure properly.

Along the shore of the estuary, where drift seaweed is plentiful, labourers gather it to supplement their means, and Mr. McKelvey says they sometimes get as much as an acre of potato land for this, but the custom is necessarily confined to a very limited district along the shore.

Some farmers, generally the best cultivators, adopt an entirely different system. To obviate the inconvenience of having a part of the potato break in poor condition, they give no potato-grounds, but require and grow for the labourer one rood of potatoes and hand them over to him, and this arrangement, convenient for both parties, as I believe, extending.

28. There are very few cases kept by labourers in the union. At Ardaraun Mr. Mansfield gives each of his men a cow's grass on a rough tract of land at the outside of the demesne, but I met with no similar case in the union.

A peculiar bargain, a little outside of the union, is the following:—

A large farmer gives each head of a family a cow's grass, cottage, potato ground, with 4d. a week in cash, and his food in the house. The land on this farm being good, the earnings on this system would probably amount to about an average of the district.

29. With few exceptions, the live stock is confined to pigs and poultry. Goats are kept, where they are permitted, and in rare cases a cow, but these are seldom seen.

VI.—RECENT SOCIETIES AND TRADING UNIONS.

30. There are no branch societies nor trades unions among the labourers in the Letterkenny district. A few are said to have deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank.

VII.—GENERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

31. All the employers who have expressed an opinion say that the relations between their class and the labourers are good, only one qualifying his statement by saying "fairly good." During my intercourse with the labourers, I heard no expressions of dissatisfaction, except as to the cottages; nearly all the men taking it for granted that my visit was solely connected with that branch of the subject.

VIII.—GENERAL CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

32. In connection with the condition of the agricultural labourer, I may mention that there is comparatively little pauperism in the Letterkenny Union.

During the half year ending 29th September 1891, the total collective number of days of relief in the workhouse was 12,000, and in the half year ending 29th March 1892, 14,904, showing for the year an average of 77 persons in the house, or about 45 per cent. of the population, and at the latter date there were only three persons in receipt of out-door relief.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

The average rate over the union for five years has been slightly under 14s. in the pound annually, about 1d. being required in the year above mentioned for maintenance, and the remainder for establishment charges, medical subsidies, legislative expenses, sanitary purposes, Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, and numerous smaller charges which come out of the rates. Some of the reports sent in by employers take rather a rosy view of the condition of the labourers, while others look more to the dark side of the picture.

Mr. Gallagher says—"The general condition of the agricultural labourer, when compared with past years, and the present position of farmers, is very satisfactory, due in a great measure to the improved condition of the dwellings, the increase of wages, and the facilities for showing their children which are now afforded them, and the reduction in the price of food and clothing."

Mr. Peterfield says—"The general condition of the agricultural labourer, around Letterkenny, is, I think, as poor. Though they earn fair wages, the mode of living is too expensive, as the greater part of what is consumed is brought from a petty shop at too high a price. Cabbage, potatoes, and garden vegetables are discarded as food, while tea has become the staple food, with flour and Indian meal bread. This, with heavy indulgence in tobacco, is destroying the stamina of our labourers, while the best amongst them, leaving the worthless behind."

Mr. White says—"Very much improved, especially as all food products are so cheap, but the class is forced to spend too much money in public-houses, consequently, now and again, when work slackens, they feel the pinch."

Mr. McFadden says—"The limited wages and partial employment deprive him from living anyway comfortably, and the condition of their houses is most assuredly injurious to their health."

Mr. Thompson says—"The labourer is in a good thriving condition, and well employed, but his house is generally in poor, and in bad repair."

Mr. Stevenson says—"When compared with 20 years ago, the condition of the labourer has immensely improved. With industry and economy the farm labourer at present is better off than the tenant farmer, not having any demands to meet, the low price of produce does not affect him, except heavily."

"Those who have a large family working can live very comfortably. With an improvement in the houses, which is gradually taking place by old houses falling and being replaced by more modern ones, the labourer is financially situated."

I have already, at the end of paragraph 25, quoted Mr. Montgomery's opinion as to the cottages, and he further remarks that "employment is required for women and girls in the winter season."

Mr. McKelvey says—"Wages are much higher now than they were 15 years ago, and the necessities of life cheaper."

"It is evident the position of the labourer is improved, and in cases where a man has a family able to work, they are able to live much better than some of the small farmers."

These opinions from employers, although varying somewhat according to the district represented, and to the views of the reporter, may on the whole be regarded as indicating a fair amount of prosperity among the labourers. Few are unemployed who are able and willing to work, and the wages earned, and other privileges enjoyed, enable the more thrifty to live better than at any time in the past.

The cottage accommodation, however, entirely fails to satisfy modern requirements, and I have noted no action where reform in this respect is more necessary than in Letterkenny.

As previously stated, few cottages have been recently built, and many of the old ones are of poor construction, and in bad repair.

No cottages have been built under the Labourers (Ireland) Act, and so far as I could ascertain, there is no intention on the part of the ratepayers to adopt the provisions of those Acts.

In an adjoining union much has been done to improve the character of the cottages on one estate, that of the Earl of Erne, at Rathfriland.

Many years ago, a branch of the London Irish Peasantry Association was organised in connection with the Erie Estate Farming Society, by which prizes are given at the annual show for the best kept cottages and gardens, as well as for vegetables, flowers, pigs,

beans, and poultry, for all of which there is the keenest competition among the labourers.

These exhibitions have done much to promote taste and thrift among the labourers, as well as to encourage cottage building by the farmers, and this estate has come to be regarded as a model, so far as cottages and gardens are concerned, throughout the district in which it is situated. The establishment and steady working of similar organisations would doubtless tend to produce similar results in other districts, but some more rapid method of educating public opinion seems to be required in the district of Letterkenny and many other parts of the north of Ireland.

It is not easy to suggest a remedy for the existing state of things, where the ratepayers are unwilling to adopt the provisions of the Labourers' Acts.

A more rigid administration of the sanitary law perhaps by employing that very efficient body, the Royal Irish Constabulary, to prosecute, would be a step in the right direction, and, in addition to that, the granting of loans for cottage building at a low rate of interest, would, I have reason to believe, have a very beneficial effect.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. McCune,
(Assistant Commissioner.)

R.—EL.
LONDON
1885.

A P P E N D I X

Derivates from Foreign Karyotypes

	1. J. M. C. Green Esq., Cashier, N.Y. Tulahoma, 202 1st.	2. Mr. John Gallagher, Tulahoma, 202 1st.	3. Mr. John Fortinckle, Tulahoma, 202 1st.
The supply of labour	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 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	1.	2.	3.	4.
	Mr. Wm. Thompson, Valentine, 1891-1892	Mr. W. J. Knapp Valentine, 1891-1892	Mr. John B. Stearns, Valentine, 1891-1892	
1. The supply of labor	Plenty in this part of the country There gets some from Wash. D.C. in harvest	A sufficient supply. Decrease of 25 per cent. No immigration. General starvation better than famine, it is, before there could other dis- turbance	Quite abundant. Decrease. Efficiency better than former times. Immi- gration very much reduced in this part of the country.	
2. Conditions of em- ployment	Both regular and casual. Em- ployment by week, half year, week, or day. Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer, and from half to dark in winter, with two hours for meals in summer, and none for dinner in winter. Six-day work ages, except at cattle.	Regular and continuous. Half yearly and weekly. Hours in summer, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with 15 hours of rest- ing for dinner. Winter, 7 a.m. to dark. None employed on Sunday except cowboys and horsemen.	Regular and intermittent. By the week. First six weeks by the half year. In summer from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. with an hour and half for dinner. In winter from 7:30 to 6 p.m. with 15 hours work in sum- mer, seven in winter. No holiday work.	

APPENDIX

E₁—VI.
LITERATURE
CITED

in LITHUANIAN URBAN

[illegible]

H 4

	A. Mr. Theo. Thompson. Valerian, 108 St.	B. Mr. W. F. Kinross. Valerian, 268 St.	C. Mr. John A. Stevenson. Valerian, 104 St.
1 Wages and expenses	Is to 15s. Dressing and cutting only by piecework. Dressing 6d. per lb. Gals 2s. 6d. each.	Is to 15s. Dressing and cutting by piece. Dressing 1d. per lb. Gals 2s. 6d. each. Potatoes 1d. and garden, and land for garden. Annual earnings:—Good ordinary labourer, 20l.; men in charge of horses and cattle, 25l.	Is. No piecework. Frequenters, with and land, and days allowed for labour of potatoes. Cottons and potato ground. Estimated earnings:— Wages - - - 6 s. 6 Cottons - - - 25 s. 6 Land for potatoes - 2 s. 6 Total - - - 34 s. 8
2 Collaboration and regulation	A sufficient number. State of repair good. No rent, stone and lime and church. Two apartments. Weekly wages—2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. State paid for service of college.	None to formerly—all on the house—at short distance from work, good repair. Stone and lime, plastered in wood cases. Goodly, one room, 11 ft. square. Ventilation, drainage, and water supply satisfactory. Five old houses and generally bad. Cottages are held free of rent.	Supply less than in the past. Considerable to work. No rent in houses and no farm. Old houses small, new ones better. Some, goodly good. National, stone, and stone. Apartments, 14s. to 20s. each. There is no house. In some cases rooms are small and ventilation not good. Drainage and water supply good. Fuel houses the only one house. Fuel generally is a week for house and garden.
3 Furniture, appliances, &c.	—	Most are good. Potatoes and calicoes. Half an acre of potatoes, as much of ground. No cow pasture. Many goats are kept, at some times a cow. No hens.	One good. Potatoes and calicoes, nearly all that is given. One good of potato ground given. Low stock kept, cows, pigs, goats, and in some cases a cow.
4 Beneficial structures	None	None in this district.	None in this part of the country.
5 Trade and income	None.	None	None
6 General conditions	Available.	Good.	Fairly good.
7 General condition of the agricultural labourer.	The labourer is in a good financial position, and well employed, but has been generally in poor and in bad times.	Prosperous.	For some years past the payment of labour has been a very serious item in financial position of wages are very good. When compared with 20 years ago the condition of the labourer has improved, improved. With industry and economy the farm labourer is in a better position than the lowest farmer, not having any demands to meet the big price of produce does not affect his work beneficially. Those who have a little land working can live very comfortably. With no improvement in the house, as is generally the case, by old houses, being, and being replaced by more modern ones, the labourer is favourably situated.

in LIVERPOOL UNION—continued.

E.-F.
LIVING
ECONY

13. Mr. A. Spurgeon, Steward to E. C. Marshall, Esq., Pulman, 201.	16. Mr. A. Guley, P. L. G.	17. Mr. J. E. Montgomery, Valentine, 203, 11a.	18. Mr. John McKellog, Valentine, 204, 11a.
In 10 to 12 Dooness sometimes given as 1d per perch of 12 feet. Harvest was 1d 10 to 12 per day. Potatoes, one row of potato ground, given for a cow, and cottage.	12 to 14 a year, with board and lodging in farmer's house. Boys from 12, down to 14, a year in farmer's house.	10 a week. These work, from 10 to 12, a perch, from 12 to 14, a perch, from 14 to 16, a perch. Boys from 12 to 14, a perch. In all a day, 10 to 12, a perch, potato ground, and sometimes a cow's grass. Quotations for 10 to 12 a week, 10 to 12, a perch, average earnings, 12.	Wages are much higher now than they were 10 years ago, while all sorts of farm produce have been steadily falling, and the business of the country depressed.
Better than in the past. All on farms. Mostly all stone and dried. From two to three roods, 10 to 12 feet. This condition, good drainage and water supply. Two out-houses filled by labourers while em- ployed.	Same as in the past. Disposed on farms. Repair fairly good, generally two rows, which only one range built directly from stone, others from stone to which labourer works. Stone are covered by labourers.	Five on the farm. Two more therefore. Conveyance, sub- sistence, 10 to 12, a perch. In that respect, while stone and have a few new cottages, detached, detached. Two to three rows. Kitchen 14 x 18, dining 10 x 12, wash. No gas local water supply. Well and drainage. From 10 to 12 weekly. For partly about an income of 10 to 12, a perch. Ordinary rent for cottage and garden, 10 a week.	It is evident the position of the labourer is improved, and in cases where a man has a family able to work, they are able to live much better than most of the small houses. The cottage improvement is in most cases fairly good, and in case of a plethora, there is abundance of small gardens attached. Some of them have stone, and in every case they have as much potato ground as they can manage.
Small garden, fairly cultivated. One row of potato land, and grass for cow on rough part of down.	Land for cottage for potatoes, landed with employer's house.	Gardens, about 10 perches, culti- vated by small labour. No other rows. Potato ground from 1 to 12 roods, or part payment for farm of stone, 10 to 12, a perch, a pig, sometimes a cow.	In cases where they live convenient to the farm, and have access to market, it is often as high as 10 rows.
—	No benefit noticed in this dis- trict.	None.	There are no benefit notices or wages notices about the agricul- tural labourer in this district.
—	—	None.	—
—	—	The relations are good.	The general relations between em- ployers and employed in this dis- trict have always been of the most friendly kind.
—	Above remarks apply to the dis- trict of Birmingham.	When men are steadily employed they are fairly contented. The labourer in rural areas would re- quire to be richer, and employ- ment is required for women and girls in the winter season.	Wages of ploughman 10 a week, and board with cottage and 10 rows of potato land. Boy with week 10 to 12 a year and board and lodging. Man, 10 to 12, in last year and board and lodging.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR,

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER,

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. McCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF LIMAVADY
(CO. LONDONDERRY).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

TO GEORGE DEANE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

R.—VII.
LIMAVADY.

George House, Sirahane,
February 1891

Sir,
(1) I have the honour to submit the following report on the Union of Limavady, Ireland.

(2) The area of the Union is 153,719 acres, and the poor law valuation £68,795.

By the census of 1881, the population was 94,331, and by the returns of 1891, 23,369, showing a decrease during the decade of 30·9 per cent.

(3) The Union of Limavady is situated in the northern part of the county of Londonderry, being bounded by the sea on the north for about five miles, by Lough Foyle on the north-west, for about 15 miles, on the west by the Londonderry Union, and on the south by the Sperrin Mountains, the northern spurs and slopes of which form the electoral divisions of Glenties and Omeavagh, and the higher part of the division of Fenny. The Union is separated on the east from the Unions of Coleraine and Magherafelt by a range of peaks from 1,000 to 1,500 feet high, with elevated, transverse valleys, forming the watershed between the river Bann in the adjoining Unions and the river Roe in Limavady.

From Foenlen, in the western part of the Union, a broad range called the Longermore mountain extends in a north-east direction for six or seven miles, its highest point being 1,208 feet above sea-level.

The high tract includes part of six electoral divisions, two of which—Faghavale and Ballykelly—slope towards Lough Foyle, two more—Drom and Biraw—slope towards the river Roe on the east, while Foenlen lies on the southern and Highlands on the northern slope of this ridge. The river Roe rises in the mountains to the south, flowing northward through the Union till it is abruptly turned aside by Reevonagh mountain, from which it flows westward to Lough Foyle.

(4) The prevailing rock formation in the middle, southern, and western parts of the Union, is micaceous schist, with small scattered patches of micaceous gneiss, and in Bunady, in the neighbourhood of Dungiven, a very fine development of the limestone.

To the north and east of these metamorphic rocks, there is a belt of carboniferous sandstone, which, at Altmore, near Dungiven, yields building stone of great excellence. Further east, another sandstone formation occurs, and this flanks a high basaltic ridge, which bounds the Union on the east.

All these formations are covered to a considerable height with boulder clay and gravel, which becomes thinner as the elevation increases, until they merge in mountain bog and bare rock.

There are extensive alluvial deposits. About Dungiven and Gelvin there are alluvial tracts on the banks of the Roe, and again around Limavady, on the Roe and Castle rivers; while further down the river Roe this formation widens out into a broad plain, extending along the shore of Lough Foyle, and including extensive sloelands, a large breadth of which have been taken from the sea.

To the north of the river Roe, the flat country of Magilligan is largely formed of blown sand.

(5) As might be inferred from the differences of level, and from the rock formation, there is the greatest possible variety of soils in this district, ranging from barren mountain to the finest corn-producing land in the Kingdom.

Commencing at the north, the electoral divisions of Benmore and Bellarene have a tract of mountain next their eastern boundary, between which and the sea the soil is chiefly sandy, or a mixture of sand and moor, of medium and low quality.

This tract was formerly merely, the mountain streams being retained by the sandhills next the coast, but a canal about three miles in length now catches the mountain drainage, and conducts it by a cut through

the sandhills into Lough Foyle, so that this flat district is now dry, and although a light soil, fairly productive, being famous for its potatoes. On this sandy plain the base of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland was measured.

To the south side of the Roe, and extending along Lough Foyle, lies Myron, one of the most fertile tracts of alluvial soil in Ireland, and thence to the west, along Lough Foyle, the division of Ballykelly, the lower part of which is also fine alluvial land, and the same vein runs along the high side through Faghavale, to the boundary of the Londonderry Union, but the divisions of Ballykelly and Faghavale both run to a high level on the Longermore range, which lowers their average valuations.

South of Faghavale, still keeping the boundary of the Union, lies Foenlen, which has a considerable proportion of mountain, but some large and highly improved farms, and the same remarks apply to Fenny, which lies to the east of Foenlen, and extends into the higher mountain ridge to the south.

Continuing eastward, across the southern part of the Union, the two large mountainous divisions of Omeavagh and Glenties occur in the order named, both of which have a comparatively large area unfit for cultivation, and held by gradiers, who stock it chiefly with harned sheep.

The peaks in the southern part of these two divisions range from 1,500 feet to upwards of 2,000 feet in height.

Returning northward, the division of Dungiven, including the town of the same name, comes next. It has some poor high-lying land towards the east, but excellent land along the river, and in the neighbourhood of the town.

Still proceeding north, the divisions of Gelvin, Lillane, Keady, and Aghasloe occur in succession along the eastern side of the Union. These four divisions all run into the dividing mountain range, but all contain a large proportion of good arable towards the west, the division of Aghasloe particularly having a large breadth of rich lowly and running from the river to the base of the mountain.

South of Aghasloe, and between the river Roe and the divisions of Keady and Lillane, lies the beautiful division of Fruithill, the property of Mr. G. T. McCausland, D.L., the principal resident proprietor.

The small but very fertile division of Limavady adjoins it, lying round and including the town, and with the neighbouring divisions of Myron, Fruithill, and the lower parts of Aghasloe, Ballykelly, and Highlands, forms a district of tillage land which it would be difficult to surpass.

The division of Highlands lies to the east of Ballykelly and south of Limavady, and, as its name indicates, runs to a pretty high elevation, but it includes some very good tillage land on the northern slope. To the south of Highlands lie the divisions of Biraw and Drom, both of which have a considerable proportion of high lying moorland, with fair tillage land on their eastern slopes next the river Roe.

Of the 19 electoral divisions which form the Union, 16 have more or less mountain, and some of them considerable areas of mountain bog.

The remaining three, which have neither mountain nor waste land of any sort, are Limavady, Myron, and Fruithill.

(6) Freehold farms are more numerous in the Limavady Union than anywhere I have visited, and perhaps more numerous than in any other locality in Ireland.

About 25 years ago, the greater part of the Marquis of Waterford's estate in this Union was sold to the tenant, but very high prices were then paid, two-thirds of the purchase money being advanced by Government, and the purchasing tenants in some cases being obliged to borrow the balance at a high rate.

Owing to these causes, many of the holdings have since changed hands, and there does not appear to be

B-YEL
LANAVADY.

the same general air of prosperity here as on the farms purchased more recently under the Ashbourne Act and Land Acts from the Fishmongers' and Grocers' Companies.

(1) Evidence
of the
Company.

(7) In the seventeenth century, the London Companies received large grants of forfeited lands, in the county now called Londonderry, the estates of the Fishmongers and Grocers being at Ballykelly and Dringiven respectively, and in the Union of Linsavady, and the estate of the Grocers partly in the Union.

The companies have exercised all the rights of owners in fee, although it is still contended that their grants were in the nature of trusts for public purposes, and an action is at present pending seeking to have it so declared.

This vexed question need not be discussed here, but the sales made by the companies to occupying tenants, and particularly those made to labourers and indentured, have a special interest.

(2) Sale of
cottage
holdings
by the
Fishmongers'
Company.

(8) I am indebted to Mr. Connolly Gage, the former agent of the Fishmongers' Company, for the following particulars as to sales of cottages and allotments:—

"There were 28 cottages sold to labourers and mechanics in Ballykelly, most of the owners having been employed by the company. Where the land attached to the cottages, as in some 10 cases, exceeded an acre, the money was got from the Land Commissioners, and the instalments are paid to them. In the remainder, the land attached being under or about half an acre, Government would not give the money. The company made a scheme for these holdings themselves, instalments extending over 20 years."

"This leaves the annual payment about the same as the annual rent paid previously."

"I am sorry to say several of these holdings are already in the hands of land shopkeepers, or mortgaged to them for their full value."

(3) Sales
by the
company
to occupying
tenants.

(9) The Fishmongers' Company have, I believe, sold all their farms to the occupying tenants; the Grocers' Company have sold partly to the tenants and partly to speculators, while the Grocers' Company have sold to tenants only, but have still a portion unsold.

The prices at which the tenants bought on these estates appear to have been very moderate, and they obtained Government loans repayable in 48 years, on such terms as to bring the annual instalments now payable to rather less than three-fifths of the former rents.

The estate of the Fishmongers' Company, which is all in the Linsavady Union, ranks itself out as the most central of the three, by the excellence of its buildings, whether churches, schools, farm buildings, or cottages, and the land is also highly improved and well farmed.

A small portion only of the Grocers' estate is in the Linsavady Union, and is well cultivated. The remainder, including the village of Killybeg, being in the Londonderry Union, I had not an opportunity of visiting it.

(10) Con-
ditions
other than
agricultural.

(10) There are a number of men in the Union who call themselves fishermen, and appear to be so-called in the course of return. Although fishing is not their employment, their chief source of livelihood being the collection of seaweed.

The deep water of Lough Foyle lies to the western side, and on the eastern or Linsavady side there are extensive mud flats, bare at low water, but covered by every tide. The west wind blows in large quantities of floating weed, and the object of these so-called fishermen is to take it before it comes ashore. To do so they go out in boats and take it from the water, bring it ashore, and pile it in heaps for sale to the inland farmers.

At other times these men shoot wild fowl on the flats, and their children gather shellfish. The only claim they have to be called fishermen is that some of them take employment from the Foyle and Bann Salmon Fishery Company for short three months in summer.

These men themselves say, "We live by the sea," which is true in a double sense.

They like a cottage as near the shore as possible, whether a good one or not, and the consequence is that some of them are paying rent for very poor cabins.

They hire these cottages from farmers at small rents, but bound to work up the rent in harvest, at moderate fixed wages, according to Mr. MacDonnell, 2s. a day for a man and 1s. 6d. for a woman.

The sanitary authority have had representations before them as to the need of cottages for these men, and have decided to build two as an experiment, but they find it difficult to acquire sites. The number of

these "fishermen" returned in 1881 was 62, and in 1881, 51.

The shirt and underclothing industry is carried on in the Union by agencies from Londonderry, and according to the census returns for 1881, four men and 762 females over 16 years of age were so employed in the Linsavady Union, and there are many under that age.

In the town of Linsavady, however, the weaving of linen is the principal employment for females, the "Linsavady Water Power Weaving Company" giving constant employment to about 200 women and girls and 15 men.

There were formerly a number of bleach works and flax mills on the river Roe, but both these industries have been abandoned. Flax spinning is still largely carried on, and there are flax scutching mills scattered over the Union.

There are brick and tile works in the Union, but not so extensive as formerly.

At Altinaver, near Dringiven, there are quarries of sandstone, and closely to resemble Portland stone, but being far from water communication there is no export trade in the stone, it being worked chiefly for the supply of Londonderry and local towns.

(11) The whole part of the Linsavady Union is essentially a village district.

Except on Saturdays, there is little old pasture, but there has been, here as elsewhere, a tendency during the past few years to lay down suitable lands, owing to the high price of stock, up till last year, and the comparatively low price of corn. The greater part of the rich land is, however, still cultivated in rotation, with one year's hay and one year's pasture on the best soils, and a longer term of pasture on medium soils.

On the small and medium sized holdings better is made, and young cattle are reared till a year or a year and a half old, and pigs are reared and fed, and potatoes and oats sold. On the larger and richer farms store cattle are grazed, and fattened by horses feeding in winter, and a great deal of oats, potatoes, and hay are sold. There are a few nice flocks of sheep kept by gentleman farmers near Linsavady, but the lower part of the district is too rich and damp for sheep. On the mountain tracts in the southern part of the Union, however, sheep of the hardier breeds are largely kept.

Flax is generally grown by the smaller farmers, but not to so great an extent as formerly, and less cultivation has almost disappeared from the larger holdings.

(12) Large holdings are more numerous in the Linsavady district than in most parts of the north of Ireland.

There are in the Union—

Holdings above £1,000—	No.
From £500 to £1,000	1
" 500 " 1,000	2
" 1,000 " 2,000	9
" 2,000 " 3,000	11
" 3,000 " 5,000	24
" 5,000 " 10,000	119

These figures are only approximate. Being taken from the "Poor" list, rejecting the non-residents, they necessarily exclude females, many of whom hold large farms, and they are given merely as an indication of the class of holdings existing in the finer parts of the Union, where, of course, a large proportion of the labourers find employment.

As in other districts of the north of Ireland, the great majority of the landowners are working farmers, who reside little or no labour outside their own families, the number of farmers exceeding the whole number of labourers.

I.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

(13) The supply of labour in the Linsavady Union appears to be pretty fairly balanced with the present demand.

Of late years from employers in the district, 10 cases that the supply is sufficient, while Mr. Brailly reports that labour is "periodically scarce," and Mr. MacDonnell says that "owing to emigration" servants are so scarce that their services are much "better paid for." Mr. Brailly's statement would apply to almost any village district, where farmers could periodically employ extra hands, and Mr. MacDonnell's remarks appear to point more to an increased rate of wages than to an absolute scarcity of labour.

The
Annual
General
Labourers(14) Evidence
of Dringiven(15) Evidence
of Linsavady(16) The
supply of
labour
in the
district.

The
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.
(14) De-
crease from
1881 to 1891.

(15) In-
crease
attributed to
other farm
servants.

(16) ES-
timate
made by
Mr. Stevens
in 1891.

(17) Em-
ployment
generally
regular.

(18) In-
door
farm
servants.

(19) Hours
part,
limits of.

(20) Meal
hours.

(21) Actual
hours of
work.

(22) Sunday
work.

(14) The *Scots*, however, that the number of male agricultural labourers (cottagers) fell from 1,207 in 1881 to 1,154 in 1891, and that during the same decade the indoor male farm servants rose from 426 to 547, would indicate that there is no superabundant supply of labour. The important industrial class consisting of sons, brothers, and other male relatives of farmers also fell from 1,047 to 820 between 1881 and 1891, which is attributed to emigration and removal to towns.

(15) Emigration at particular seasons, such as harvest, is almost unknown, but there is always some immigration of indoor farm servants from the County Down, who are employed by the half year, and often settle permanently.

(16) With regard to the efficiency of the labourers, as compared with former times, there is considerable difference of opinion. A committee of whom the board of guardians kindly appointed to confer with me are of opinion that the efficiency is "not so good" as formerly. Mr. F. W. Hoggins, Bart., says the men are "more intelligent," Mr. Stevenson says they are "quite as good," Mr. Douglas "not so good," Rev. Mr. Marks "quite as efficient," Mr. Craig thinks they are "not so reliable or trustworthy as formerly," Mr. Broly says "efficiency decreased," while Rev. Mr. Butler considers it is "much the same," the balance of opinion leaning to the view that the men are not so efficient as formerly.

So far as I could observe during my short stay in the district, I think the labourers here compare favourably with those of any district I have visited.

They appeared to me generally to be energetic men.

II.—CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(17) The majority of the agricultural labourers in this district have regular and continuous employment, living on the larger farms in free cottages, with yearly or half-yearly engagements, subject to a month's notice.

They often remain for years on the same farm, sometimes, as Mr. Stevenson says, "as long as 40 years," and are succeeded by their sons.

As in other districts, there are some casual labourers, who rent cottages and work on short engagements, but the greater number of the men, and the best of them, are in regular employment.

The casual labourer is often boarded in the employer's house, but the regular labourer is less frequently engaged in this way than in some other districts.

(18) There is also a rather large class of indoor farm labourers, engaged by the half-year, generally in the employment of medium-sized farmers, who have no cottages. These men belong to the poorer parts of the district and to the County Down. As already stated, there was an increase in this class, above the age of 20, of 111 persons, between 1881 and 1891.

(19) The usual hours of work are from 7 o'clock in the morning till 4 in the evening, with an hour for dinner, horsemen having somewhat longer hours. Mr. Drennan says, "Half an hour extra morning and evening." Women, when employed, work the same hours as ordinary labourers.

(20) It is usual over this district to breakfast before commencing work, or at least before going to the fields, but horsemen come to the stable to feed and harness, and return for breakfast.

An hour at midday is allowed for dinner, and generally more to horsemen. Rev. Mr. Marks says, "From an hour to an hour and half for meals," and Mr. MacDonnell says, "A ploughman takes an 'hour and a half in spring for dinner, and the rest of the year an hour."

(21) The hours of labour are, therefore, 10 hours for ordinary labourers and women, or as long as the length of the day permits, with about an hour more for ploughmen and other horsemen.

(22) About one-fourth of the men are employed on Sunday, horsemen for an hour or more, and cattle-men for about three or four hours, during the winter season.

III.—WAGES AND PERQUISITES.

(23) The current rate of wages for a regular man living on the farm, is from 8s. to 9s. a week for an ordinary labourer, 9s. to 10s. for a ploughman, and 12s. for a shepherd or cattle-man, with a free cottage and the perquisites afterwards described.

(24) There is very little piece-work given, draining and lamp-posting being the only jobs I heard of as being done in this way.

(25) A rise of 25 per cent. is given during the harvest to the regular hands. In some parts of the district, where "labourers" are settled, they are bound to work in harvest for the farmers from whom they hold their cottages.

(26) The usual perquisites are, a free cottage and small garden, potato ground, varying from a rood to half an acre, worked by the employer's horses, and the cutting of seaweed and fuel.

In some cases milk is given,† and in very rare cases a cow's grass, but the latter appears to be always compensated by a lower rate of wages.

(27) The ordinary labourer, if he live near the sea, sometimes gets a little sea-weed, either by his own labour after hours or by that of his children, when permitted by the farmer to gather it off the shore, but, as before mentioned, there is a class of men in this district, with whom sea-weed gathering is a regular business, and farm work but an occasional job.

These men can make a labourer's wages by working about half time, or according to Mr. MacDonnell,‡ when the tide suits. Some few of them keep horses, and many have donkeys, and they put the weed into heaps above tide mark, and sell it to farmers.

It is common for the regular farm labourer to buy a few loads of weed, which his employer carts for him, and this enables him to grow the half-acre of potatoes and to feed pigs, which thus form a large addition to his earnings.

(28) The estimated annual earnings, according to the committee of the board of guardians, are 30L 8s. for an ordinary labourer and 34L for a ploughman.

Mr. Stevenson's estimate is 27L for an ordinary labourer, and 34L for a man in charge of his yard. Mr. Drennan, a very large farmer, estimates the earnings, including all perquisites, at 16s. and 10s. a week, equal to 34L and 41L per annum.

Mr. Deane gives 25L and 30L as his estimate, Mr. Douglas 32L and 31L, Rev. Mr. Marks 33L, "besides what they make out of pigs and fowls," Mr. Craig says 23L and 34L. Mr. Broly "about 20L," and the Rev. Mr. Butler 25L and 31L, or 10s. to 12s. a week.

Some of these gentlemen appear to put an exceptionally high value on their perquisites and allowances, or perhaps they include the profits derived from pigs and poultry, where half an acre of potatoes is grown, while Mr. Broly allows nothing for perquisites, although Mr. Gillmore and another farmer in the same locality, whose returns I have not included, both state that a free cottage, half an acre of potato ground, and cottage of fuel are given in that neighbourhood, worth, perhaps 7L or 8L.

From all these data, and making a reasonable allowance for perquisites, I am disposed to estimate the earnings of a good ordinary labourer at from 27L to 30L, and those of a ploughman from 30L to 33L, or, with the exceptional privileges given by Mr. Drennan, at 35L indoor men earn from 18L down, or, including board and lodging, about 25L.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

(29) The supply of cottages in this Union, in respect of number, is quite sufficient, and owing to the steady decrease of population, there are some unoccupied, and becoming dilapidated.

They are generally situated on the larger farms, but a good many are concentrated in the towns of Limerick and Dungannon, in the villages of Fries and Ballyvaughan, and in some populous townlands near the Lough shore.

R.—VILL.
LABOURERS.
(23) Current
rate of weekly
wages.

(24) Piece
work and
seasons.

(25) Har-
vest and
harvest.

(26) Per-
quisites.

(27) Sea
weed
gathering.

(28) Annual
earnings.

(29) Cot-
tages
with cost
number.

* See Appendix B.
† Appendix A, column 1.
‡ Appendix A, column 2.
§ Appendix A, column 3.
¶ Appendix A, column 4.
‡ Appendix A, column 5.

§ Appendix A, column 1.
¶ Appendix A, column 2.
‡ Appendix A, column 3.
§ Appendix A, column 4.
¶ Appendix A, column 5.
‡ Appendix A, column 6.

2.—VII.
LABOUR.
(a) Report
and con-
struction
(b) Mod-
ernisation.

(a) With regard to repair and construction the cottages exhibit every variety, from the old thatched brick cabin, without any internal walls, to good slated brick cottages, having three and sometimes four apartments, and sanitary arrangements.

(b) In the clay land parts of the district, the original cottages appear to have been built of mud, and, although many of these have been replaced by more modern buildings, some still remain, patched up often with brickwork, and sometimes having stone abutments built against them at the gables to prevent the walls from falling outwards.

In the upland parts of the country, where stone is plentiful and the soil not so retentive, the mud cabin disappears, and the normal cottage consists of a stone and lime building about 20 feet long by 12 to 15 feet wide, divided into two apartments, or a kitchen and room, as it is called. Occasionally, one of these old cottages is found with only one apartment, about 15 feet square, or even less.

(c) In driving over the Union, I found that a considerable number of cottages, of a better class, have been built of late years. Reference has already been made to 28 cottages sold by the Fishmongers' Company, with the allotments on which they stand, to labourers and mechanics. These are substantially built, with three to four apartments and out offices.

The company also built a good many cottages on the farms of their tenants, and those posed with the farms on which they are situated.

There are two very good modern cottages near Aghacloe church, but, owing to some change of ownership, these are not occupied at present.

Mr F. W. Egan, Bart., has a number of very nice comfortable cottages on his home farm at Ballinacra, to each of which is attached a road of garden.

Passing from Ballinacra into Myross, Mr. Kane, of Ballyhenry, has built four substantial cottages to replace some poor cabins. Each of these has, on the ground floor, a porch 6 x 4½, kitchen 12 x 12, and bedroom 12 x 8, and on left one large apartment 20 x 12.

In the same townland there are two excellent four-roomed cottages built by the late Baron Martin.

Further on, at Carracross, Mr. Marks has built one very excellent two-story cottage, the apartments being four, and measuring 18 x 11, 18 x 7, 18 x 11, and 12 x 7, but in the same locality there are still several poor old cabins, which urgently require improvement.

At Ballynacra, Mr. MacDonnell has converted a large barn into two very spacious labourers' dwellings, but there is still a nest of poor cottages in this townland, which is very populous.

At Lemoind, Mr. Cherry has nice cottages, all of which are in good repair, and some of which are very tasteful, one is particularly well kept, and I was told the garden had won the prize of the Irish Peasantry Society. Two cottages at Oribels, belonging to Mr. Haskin, are of peculiar excellence. Each has a kitchen 16 x 11; sitting-room 18 x 11; bedroom, 12 x 9; and porch 8 x 6 on the ground-floor, and a good bedroom and storeroom upstairs, and there is half an acre of land attached to each, the rent charged being 2s. a week.

In the same townland Mr. Patton has a nice new cottage, and Mr. Linton one in the adjoining townland, but in this populous neighbourhood there are still some poor patched-up old mud cabins.

Mr. Gibson, at Broughan, has good roomy cottages, with three apartments.

At Bush Hall, Mr. B. H. Lane has excellent cottages, one pair, newer than the others, have each four good apartments, 15 x 18, 15 x 9, and a porch on ground floor, and 15 x 12 and 15 x 9 upstairs.

Mr. Brennan has 10 cottages at Carrabell, with three apartments in each, and in excellent repair, but they are small enough for some of the families.

Mr. Given has four cottages built by the Fishmongers' Company, at a cost, Mr. Given thinks, of about 750 each. These are built in pairs, the central part two stories, and the wings one story. The one-story part forms a kitchen, 12 x 12, the two-story part two apartments, 12 x 9 and 12 x 7 below, and one above, 12 x 12, which might be divided with advantage.

(d) All the improved cottages heretofore referred to are in the western or low-lying divisions of the Union, where the farms are generally of good size, but there still remain some very bad cottages in this district. At Berryside a row of three under the same roof have only one apartment in each. The walls are mud repaired with brickwork, and the roofs thatched. The first, William Anderson's, measures about 15 x 12 feet, pays

a rent of 1s. a week, and is occupied by the man and wife, and a girl of 15.

James McFethland, his wife, and three children have one about the same size; and Michael Deehan, with his wife and six children, occupy the third, which measures about 15 x 12.

At Corradale, in the same neighbourhood, there are three cottages with only one apartment in each, but these are rather better, and not so crowded. One has a single woman, another two women and a child, and the third, a man and wife and three young children.

The former of these groups is the worst example of cottages in the western part of the district.

(e) Towards the central part of the Union modern cottages are not very numerous, and they are decidedly rare in the eastern and southern parts.

Mr. Maury has four nice cottages of modern construction at Ardmore, and five of an older class. Mr. McCausland, D.L., has also a few of a very substantial character at Ardmore, and all his residential places the cottages, though of the old type, are comfortable and well kept.

Mr. Ritter, at Roe Park, has a number of snug cottages, recently improved by the addition of concrete floors and wooden sheeting below the eaves, and at Peabody Captain Ogilby has very nice, though rather small, cottages on his domains. In the southern part of the Union, there are comparatively few cottages, the farms generally being small; but I was told that the cottages at Mr. Stevenson's place, although of the old pattern, are very comfortable.

Mr. Christie, at Ballymacdonagh, has one extremely good cottage, with four apartments and a porch, the apartments all about 14 x 11, and the garden about a rood. At Greyville Mr. Brody has recently built two cottages costing about 1800, the accommodation consisting of kitchen, bedroom, and porch below, and one large apartment above stairs, which would be better if divided.

(f) In the eastern part of the Union there are some very poor cottages, defective in space and unsanitary in construction.

At Bolea, in Aghacloe, there are some very bad, the worst one, in which a widow and seven of a family live, is a one-roomed cabin, measuring about 16 x 12.

At Ballinacra a woman and five of a family live in one somewhat similar.

At Terrydon (Walker) an able labourer, Wilson Douglas, his wife, and five of a family, from 17 to five years old, live in part of a bad cottage. They have a kitchen about 7 x 11, and a bed closet 6 x 6, at a rent of 7d. a week.

This man informed me that he had recently wanted a one-roomed cottage in the same townland, having it would find, during his absence of which he had sent in a representation under the Labourers' (Ireland) Act to the local authority, applying for a cottage, which had been refused. Douglas requested me to look at his former cottage, which I did, it being pointed out by Mrs. McGuane. This cottage, which is now vacant, has one apartment about 15 x 12, with one small window. Marshall McGuane, a labourer, with his wife and four children, from 14 to three years of age live close by in a cottage of one room, about 15 x 14, for which, with a garden of 10 or 12 perches, he pays 2s. a week.

These are among the worst cases of overcrowding which came under my notice; but there are others only a degree better.

(g) In the town of Limerick, which has a population of 2,746, the labourers' cottages are in general fair, and their sanitary condition, with a few exceptions, is good. Several blocks are new or comparatively new, such as Mr. Connell's in Muckaduff Row, and Mr. Lynn's in Buttery Road, both of which appear to have been designed after Mr. Given's cottages in Protestant Street. All of these have a frontage of about 16 feet, and vary in width from about 16 to 22 feet, being a storey and a half high, or about 12 or 13 feet to the eaves.

They have a narrow hall, a kitchen, and one bedroom below, and one bedroom or sometimes two above stairs, according to the width of the cottage. The upper apartments are about four feet high at the eaves, are covered, and lighted from the roof. All the more recently built cottages have proper sanitary accommodation.

William Street has older cottages of a somewhat similar class, and John of Main Street is not in so good repair, and is defective in sanitary arrangements and drainage.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

(a) Cottages
in the
western part
of Union.

(f) Poor
cottages in
the eastern
part of
Union.

(g) Cottages
in Limerick
town.

(d) Some
improvements
had
been made
in the western
part of
Union.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.(A) Cottages
and
gardens.

There are a few old cottages in several streets, without a back door or yard, but on the whole the cottages in Limerick, though rather small, are superior to those generally found in the lanes and outskirts of Irish towns.

(A) In Dungen, with a population of 752, there are some comfortable cottages, but many are poor. This is one of the small towns which is not losing population, and hence its appearance is not marred by vacant or dilapidated houses, like many Irish towns, and rents appear to rise high for the accommodation afforded.

A carter, for a house with three poor apartments and an out-house for his horse, pays 3s. 6d. a week, and in the yard attached, a wretched unsanitary apartment, pays 1s. 2d. a week.

David Kelly, a labourer, pays 1s. 6d. a week for a kitchen 18x11, with a left overhead of the same size, three feet high at side. Thomas Henry pays 1s. 6d. a week for two apartments 18x12 and 12x8. Thomas Muldoon 2s. a week for two apartments 18x12 and 12x6, with a small loft and eight or 10 perches of garden, and Peter Kane 10s. a month for a kitchen and two small bedrooms, and 12 or 16 perches of garden.

The cottages in the village of Feeny (population 163) are good, and the sanitary condition of the little place excellent.

(C) Ventila-
tion and
drainage.

(C) There is not generally much attention paid to ventilation or drainage in the older cottages in the rural parts of the Union. In the better class of new cottages, however, improved windows have been introduced, and in some cases drains have been provided, and concrete floors have been adapted, which are very useful in low-lying situations.

(D) Water
supply good.

(D) The water supply over the Union generally is good. The town of Limerick has a fine supply brought from springs three miles distant, and pumps have been erected for the supply of Dungen, Ballykelly, and Feeny.

(E) Greater
ship and
trains.

(E) There are not many cottages in the rural part of the Union held directly from the estate owner. Magilligan, however, appears to be an exception, where, Rev. Mr. Butler says, about one in seven are so held.

The greater number are held by the labourers from tenant farmers, or occupying freeholders, on condition of working for them, but a good many are also held at a rent.

The only cottages owned by labourers* that I heard of, are those already referred to as sold by the Fishmongers' Company at Ballykelly.

(F) Drain-
age of
ditching.

(F) In the towns of Limerick and Dungen, the cottages are owned by leaseholders, who have built or purchased them as an investment, and they are generally let on weekly tenures at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week, and more if the accommodation is good, or if there is a lot of garden.

In the country districts the usual rent for a two-roomed cottage is 1s. a week, but sometimes they run as high as 3s. a year and upwards, according to the size of the garden attached, to 3s. 10s. and 3s. 15s.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

(G) One-
acre
plots
of
land.

(G) Gardens are attached to perhaps one-half of the cottages. In some neighbourhoods they are not common or are very small, in other districts they are common, varying in size from a root down, and in a very few instances reaching half an acre.

In general they are cultivated in a rough way, being cropped with potatoes and cabbages, but some are tastefully managed, and cropped with a variety of vegetables.

(H) Fences
for
other
crops.

(H) An annual competition of cottage gardens for prizes awarded by a committee of ladies under the auspices of the Irish Peasantry Society has been in existence for some years, and has encouraged improved cultivation, but it seems as yet to have touched only a limited number of the labourers.

This prize-winning movement is directed by an influential committee, and will doubtless extend its usefulness as the people learn to recognize its importance.

(I) Potato
ground.

(I) Potato ground is given more liberally here than in most other districts. One rood† (Carmingham) equal to one rood and 12 perches is stated by the com-

mittee of guardians to be the usual quantity, and this is, perhaps, as much as the labourer can provide means for, except where he has special facilities, such as access to sea-weed. On the large farms near the sea it is common to give half an acre, and Mr. Dromann* gives from half an acre to three roods, according to the size of the family.

This is a great benefit to the labourer, giving him not only an ample supply of potatoes for his family, but also enabling him to feed pigs without much expense in purchased food.

One labourer's wife told me she had bought last year 30 loads of sea-weed for 15s. 6d., which her master carted, and that it enabled her to plant half an acre of potatoes, and feed six pigs.

Thus, however, in the case of a very energetic, capable woman, and it is very unusual for the labourer to feed more than two pigs.

Potato grounds, like the cottages, are held on condition of working for the tenant. There are no allotments.

(J) Cow
pastures.

(J) Cow pastures are not usually given, except to the herds of high-living holdings, who are often paid in this way. Where a cow's grass is given to the regular farm labourer the wages are correspondingly lower.

Thus, Mr. Stevenson gives 7s. and 8s. a week, with a cow's grass, and the grass of the calf till six months old.

Mr. Osborne gives five of his men a cow's grass at 2s., while Mr. Douglas' men take pasture for cows from neighbouring farmers.

(K) Live
stock.

(K) The usual live stock kept by the labourers is confined to pigs and poultry, and in some cases goats.

Cows are rare on the lowlands, but commoner on the upland farms, where the pasture is of a rough description.

Bees are rarely seen.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES

(L) There are no benefit societies among the agricultural labourers.

Many of the railway labourers are members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, from which, for a weekly contribution of 6d., they receive an allowance during sickness of 12s.

VII.—TRADE UNIONS

(M) Trade unions are quite unknown among the agricultural labourers here, as, so far as I have been able to learn, anywhere in the north of Ireland.

VIII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

(N) The general relations between the employers and the labourers are said by all the employers and by the great majority of the labourers to be of the most friendly description. A few of the employers* "farmers" expressed very freely their dissatisfaction at the action of the local board, or rather their want of action, in the matter of cottage building. Rev. Mr. Butler seems to point to this when he says "Very little satisfaction expressed, but a quiet feeling on the part" of labourers to get more by some means.

Some employers assured me that the grumblers among the "farmers" are troublesome men whose nobody wants, as they give their harvest work with a grudge, the controversy turning on the point that the shore men would like to have cottages uncontrolled by the farmer, while the farmer will not let on except on the terms that the tenant gives him work in harvest and at other busy seasons to the amount of the rent. I think, however, that some of these men, and a few others in the Union who are distinctly agricultural labourers, have a substantial grievance, as they are now living in cabins which cannot be regarded as "fit for human habitation."

IX.—GENERAL COMMENTS.

(O) As to the general condition of the agricultural labourer in the Limerick Union, it compares favourably with that of most other districts, and is vastly better than some of those I have visited. The energetic character and intelligence of the larger farmers here, and the advantages as to purchase which many of them have enjoyed, have enabled them more successfully than others to grapple with the prevailing agricultural

E-VII.
LABOURERS.(N) Cow
pastures.(K) Live
stock.(L) Benefit
societies.(M) Trade
unions
known
anywhere.(N) General
relations
between
employers
and
employed.(O) General
condition
of the
agricultural
labourer
compared
favourably
with other
districts.

* Appendix B.

† Appendix A, column 1.

* Appendix A, column 4.

2. (a) (11).
UNEMPLOYED.
—
(a.) Good
number of
subjects

Depression, while the fact that the quality of the soil of the lowlands is extremely suited for tillage has been of no less use to the labourer retaining permanent employ-

(a.) Judged from the point of view of pauperism, the condition of the Union must be regarded as very favourable. Out of a population which amounted at the enumeration of 1891 to 22,309, and which may now number about 23,000, there are only 116 persons at present in the workhouse, or about one-half per cent. of the whole population, and there is no person in receipt of outdoor relief.

To the English reader, the latter statement may require explanation. There are, doubtless, many old and feeble people in the district, who would in England be in receipt of outdoor relief, but the peasantry here have a rooted objection to go into the workhouse, if they can possibly avoid it, and it is a marked feature of the administration of the poor law in many Unions in the north of Ireland, that outdoor relief is only given in cases of the most urgent necessity.

It may be right, also, to explain that the descriptions given under the head of "General Condition" by some of the gentlemen who have favoured me with returns, should be regarded as the cases of men exceptionally favoured by kind employers, and not as the normal condition of the average labourer of the district. It is, however, pleasant to know that such favourable accounts are applicable even to part of the agricultural labourers.

(15.) I cannot conclude without acknowledging my indebtedness to the board of guardians, to the very efficient clerk of the Union, and to many other gentlemen, clerical and lay, who willingly gave me every assistance and information.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) R. McKee,
(Assistant Commissioner).

THE ASSISTANT
COMMISSIONER
—

(15).
Indebted-
ness of
servants.

APPENDIX A.

RETURN FROM EMPLOYERS IN LORNAVOT TOWNSHIP.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. FARM SERVICE OR LABOUR.	Committee of Board of Guardians.	Mr F. W. Hargrave, Bart., Bathurst, 6241 15s.	W. C. Stevenson, J.P., 2142.	James Dwyer, J.P., 4602.	E. G. Osborne, J.P., 3911.	J. S. Douglas, J.P., 3921 1s.
(a) Generally sufficient. (b) Decrease. (c) No migration. (d) Not so good. Equal to other districts.	Amely sufficient. Decrease. Less stable land. No migration. More intelligent.	Generally no difficulty. Hiring half yearly. Increased. No migration. Quite so good. Cannot say.	Efficient. Decrease. None.	Sufficient. Decrease. None.	Sufficient. Decrease. None.	Quite enough. Decrease, considerable. None. Not so good. Compare favourably with other districts.
2. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.	Both regular and casual. Yearly or half-yearly.	Continuous. 8 1/2 months and weekly.	Regular. Permanently weekly. Best farm men have been half-yearly. Winter, daylight till dark.	Regular. Half-yearly.	Regular. Yearly, with one month's notice.	Regular. From May to May. One month's notice.
(a) 1. Hours.	Decrease, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ordinary, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Christmas, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Christmas, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 to 12 hours.	Winter, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Whiston, 7 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Harrogate, half an hour extra in morning and evening.	Hours, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Whiston, 7 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Harrogate, half an hour extra in morning and evening.	7 a.m. to 6 p.m. summer. High in dirt in winter.	7 a.m. to 6 p.m. In all classes but summer. From light to dark in winter.
(b) 2. Meals.	One hour for dinner. 1 1/2 hours for evening.	Five employed on Sunday.	Dinner hour, 12 till 1. 10 hours' labour.	One hour dinner.	10 hours in summer.	10 hours in summer.
(c) 3. Wages.	None, except those attending stock.	Five employed on Sunday.	Carting men, leading horses only on Sunday in winter.	Carting men, leading horses only on Sunday in winter.	One man on Sunday.	Cards men and ploughmen two hours on Sunday.
3. WAGES AND EXPENDITURE.	(a) Weekly wages.	8s. to 10s.	7s. to 8s. 6d. in winter months. 4s. to 5s. 6d. in summer months.	10s. a week.	Ordinary labourers, 10s. ploughmen, 11s.	10s. and 10s. 6d. No change for regular men in harvest, etc. Casual men, 2s. 6d. a day. Women, 1s. a day.
(b) 1. -	No post-work. No change in haytime and harvest.	No post-work. No change in haytime and harvest.	Darning 'til perched. Tarpaulin, 4s. to 5s. 6d. in winter months.	Extra for a month in harvest.	In haytime and harvest, 10s. to 11s. 6d.	In haytime and harvest, 10s. to 11s. 6d.
(c) 2. Additions to wages.	Four hours 1. road of potato land. 2. Yell and estate work. 3. M.R.	Potato land, half acre, and 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work. 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work. 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work.	Four hours. Cow's grass. 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work. 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work. 10s. to 12s. 6d. for estate work.	Five hours, garden, half acre of land cultivated for man. Keeping pigs and poultry.	Four hours, garden, and potato ground.	Four hours, garden, and potato ground.
(d) 3. -	Estimated earnings, 10s.	Estimated earnings, 10s.	Ordinary men, 10s. 6d. Yell and estate work, 11s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. per week.	Labourers, 10s. 6d. Man in charge of horses, 10s. 6d.	Ordinary men, 10s. 6d. Ploughmen, 11s. 6d.	Labourers, 10s. 6d. Ploughmen, 11s. 6d.

RETURNES FROM EMPLOYERS IN JAMNATI UNION—continued.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	Committee of Board of Oversees	8th P. W. Bhojwade, Bari, Mullana, Vidansar, 22nd 15th	W. C. Shastri, J. P. 431	Jama Dharma, J. P. good	R. G. Chavhan, J. P. 2211	J. S. Dandekar, J. P. 10th 30.
4. <i>Oversees' Accommodations.</i>						
(a) Supply	-	Much better than in the past	Two cottages, same number as formerly.	Ten cottages -	Sufficient -	Sufficient -
(b) Situation	-	Very near work	Deponed over firm -	900 yards from yard	Quarter mile away	Deponed over firm
(c) 1.	-	Many cottages are full in two days, demand being sharp.	Kept in repair by owner	In good order	Repair good	In medium repair.
2.	-	Where required, they are usually in good order.	House and motor detached -	Brick and stone -	Stone, brick, and detached -	Stone and lime, very dated. Six detached.
3.	-	Hardly any repairs. Very clean, the cottages are well decorated. Usually a well or spring near a hand.	Two rooms and bath. Some have class rooms, small room 10 by 10 and up to 12 by 12, good windows, a good fire from all cottages, good walls about 100 yards from house Cottages, by the way, 10 by 12, and for bath.	Two rooms. Good ventila- tion, drainage, and water supply.	Two rooms and kitchen. Kitchens, 12 by 10. Rooms 10 by 7 each. Ventilation, good. Drainage, same. Water supply, good. Con- crete	Two rooms, 12 by 10, and 12 by 8. No drainage. Good water supply from wells. Over-house and piggery
(d)	-	Most built by owner and sub- let to labourers. Some are of wood, some of stone. In a work for good room. Barely paid by employer.	There are 12. Best, 12 x 10, 10 x 10, 10 x 8, 10 x 6. When working for from house, dinner brought by one of the children	Given free on condition of working on farm. One month's notice.	Hold on condition of working for me. Garden in- cluded. No rent charged.	All hold on condition of work- ing for me. Garden in- cluded. No rent charged.
5. <i>Oversees' Accommodations, etc.</i>						
(a.)	-	Over good on the farm generally for oversees and labourers	Five of gardeners planted in cabbage.	Garden on road -	Garden, one good average. Vegetables, well self-suffi- cient.	15 to 20 perches. Potatoes and cabbage grown.
(b.)	-	Potatoes generally used for regular labourers, quarter to half an acre, they of tea, labourer providing seed and manure, flower the same well.	Potato ground, a good one near, according to the man and woman have	No labourers	No labourers	No labourers
(c.)	-	Over room excellent -	One room excellent -	From ground from half an acre to three rods.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, half an acre on condition of working on farm.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, while in employment.
(d.)	-	Over room excellent -	One room excellent -	From ground from half an acre to three rods.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, half an acre on condition of working on farm.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, while in employment.
(e.)	-	Over room excellent -	One room excellent -	From ground from half an acre to three rods.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, half an acre on condition of working on farm.	From ground, from one rod to half an acre, while in employment.

REVIEWS FROM EMPLOYERS IN LENAVAY UNION—continued.

	1. Committee of Board of Guardians.	2. Sir P. W. Higgins, Bart., Belfast. Valuation, 2554, 14s.	3. W. C. Harrison, J.P. 4152.	4. James Thompson, J.P. 5503.	5. R. J. Osborne, J.P. 5911.	6. J. S. Douglas, J.P. 5905, 5s.
4. ROBERT SOTHERS	-	-	-	-	None	None.
7. THOMAS URSOES	-	None	-	None	None	None.
8. GENERAL BARNARD	-	Extremely	-	Good	Good	Friendly and good.
9. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.	The Committee consider the condition of the labourer better than it ever was. There have been complaints in this regard for some time back, but the labourer is now in a better position than he was in 1880. The cottages are in a very good state of repair. Two cottages are to be built as an experiment.	The great change has been to give of late years, con- siderable improvement in the general and high prices of stock, and the labourer is now in a better position than he was in 1880. The cottages are in a very good state of repair. Two cottages are to be built as an experiment.	Here the man all seem con- tented. Have been as long as 40 years, and have seen of general improvement in oc- cupancy (the labourer has never seen to whom we have to give work suitable to their age).	-	Contentable	All employed except those who do not want to work. Better of late than in 1880.

RETURNS FROM EMPLOYERS IN LANSKY UNION—continued.

	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
	Rev. John M. Walsh, Valuation, 1901.	Mr. Wm. Glavin, (In this Union, 1911.)	Mr. George Craig, 1911.	Mr. David Brady.	Rev. Mr. Ryan.	Mr. John G. MacDonnell, 1911.
1. Ten Bucks or Less.						
(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l) (m) (n) (o) (p) (q) (r) (s) (t) (u) (v) (w) (x) (y) (z)	<p>Referred to the Union.</p> <p>No change as far as I am concerned.</p> <p>No change as far as I am concerned.</p> <p>Quite a different.</p> <p>Much the same as other things.</p>	<p>Good supply.</p> <p>About the same.</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>No change.</p>	<p>Perforated paper.</p> <p>Considerable decrease.</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>Efficiency much the same as formerly.</p> <p>About the average of other districts.</p>	<p>As before.</p> <p>Slight decrease.</p> <p>No change.</p> <p>Efficiency much the same as formerly.</p>	<p>In reference to the condition of the Union, I would say that it is a better one than it was formerly.</p> <p>Over the condition, services are much better paid for.</p>	
2. Contributions on Labour.						
(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l) (m) (n) (o) (p) (q) (r) (s) (t) (u) (v) (w) (x) (y) (z)	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Not much change.</p> <p>Not much change.</p> <p>Not much change.</p> <p>Not much change.</p> <p>Not much change.</p>	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p>	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p>	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p>	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p>	<p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p> <p>Regular and continuous.</p> <p>Large farmers by the week.</p>
3. Wages and Expenses.						
(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l) (m) (n) (o) (p) (q) (r) (s) (t) (u) (v) (w) (x) (y) (z)	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>	<p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p> <p>Wages are a good deal higher than they were a year or two ago.</p>

Parameters from Pastures in Lowland Upland Upland

[illegible]

APPENDIX B.

R-VII.
LABOURERS.

FARMERS, LABOURERS, &c., in LINYATON UNION, over 20 years of age, extracted from Census Returns.

Occupations.	1881.	1891.	Decrease per cent.	Increase per cent.
Farmers, graziers, male	2,228	2,104	5.6	—
Do. female	371	321	13.5	—
Farmers', graziers' sons, grandsons, brother, nephew	1,067	890	20.0	—
Farm bailiff	—	12	—	—
Agricultural labourer (settler)	1,287	1,154	10.4	—
Do. do. female	127	56	55.9	—
Shepherd	14	17	—	—
Farm servant, Indian, male	424	347	—	22.0
Do. do. female	64	20	68.8	—
Others engaged in, or connected with, agriculture	88	98	—	—
General labourer	948	856	—	10.4
Do. female	54	15	72.2	—
Gardener, not domestic	18	28	—	—
Fisherman	65	51	21.7	—

* These two classes are probably mixed with the general labourers in the returns for 1891.

APPENDIX C.

POPULATION, AREA, and VALUATION of the LINYATON UNION, 10 ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Electoral Division.	Population, 1881.	Population, 1891.	Area.	Post-law Valuation.	Rate made September 1892.
Aghinloo	1,628	286	9,641 2 25	4,678 0 0	5 pence
Ballykelly	1,396	1,389	8,994 3 18	4,899 18 0	6 "
Bellacra	1,679	965	5,566 1 54	2,523 18 0	6 "
Bewee	912	793	7,435 1 87	3,399 10 0	7 "
Dorn	1,664	1,617	6,626 2 0	2,448 12 0	5 "
Dungren	1,825	1,784	6,076 2 29	4,208 18 0	4 "
Drachavale	1,935	1,704	8,811 0 21	4,676 2 0	4 "
Ferry	1,969	988	6,841 2 9	2,585 12 0	7 "
Forglea	1,164	1,098	7,287 1 19	3,433 8 0	5 "
Northill	1,520	1,556	4,435 1 16	3,628 12 0	5 "
Gelton	1,297	1,030	9,069 2 15	3,535 8 0	6 "
Glinskane	1,038	1,008	16,231 3 11	1,678 0 0	6 "
Highlands	1,590	1,613	3,909 3 50	3,251 18 0	7 "
Keady	653	520	7,633 1 35	3,043 4 0	5 "
Lanavady	3,841	3,195	3,112 2 55	8,158 2 0	10 "
Lisane	1,178	991	8,288 0 15	3,041 2 0	7 "
Myra	1,538	950	4,989 0 30	3,023 8 0	6 "
Ovenough	989	809	15,064 2 16	1,983 0 0	6 "
Stree	1,167	1,051	6,083 2 39	3,573 8 0	5 "
	26,281	23,369	132,710 5 13	68,735 17 0	

The rates in the above column are for the ordinary expenditure, besides which special rates to cover expenditure for water supply have been made in the E. divisions of Ballykelly, Dungren, Ferry, and Lanavady.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

IRELAND.

REPORT

BY

MR. R. McCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF BALLYMENA
(CO. ANTRIM).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEOFFREY DRAKE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following report as to the supply of labour, and the condition of the agricultural labourer in the Union of Ballymena, Ireland.

2. Having arrived at Ballymena on the 16th of February, in accordance with an arrangement previously made, I attended a meeting of the Board of Guardians on the following day.

After briefly explaining the objects of the inquiry, a copy of Form III. was distributed to each of the gentlemen present, and I have to acknowledge the courtesy of the Board, and the assistance I obtained from its members and from the Clerk of the Union, as well as from all classes of residents, during a stay of three weeks in the district.

3. Ballymena is a very large, rich, and populous Union. It has an area of 161,161 acres, or over 250 square miles, and a gross poor law valuation of 180,566*l*. 1*s*. 6*d*.

In 1871 the population of the Union was returned at 71,402; in 1881 it had fallen to 67,794, and in 1891 to 58,957, showing a decrease of 5 per cent. in the former and of 18 per cent. in the latter decade.

4. The Union extends across the centre of the County Antrim from the River Bann on the western boundary of the county to the watershed in a mountain range on the east, near the Larne Union.

The Union of Ballymoney lies to the north and Antrim to the south.

The district is traversed from north to south by the River Maine, which has three principal tributaries, running westward from the mountain country, namely, the Claghwater on the north, the Braid in the centre, and the Glenaherry, which forms the southern boundary of the Union.

On all of these rivers there is fine water-power, which has been largely utilized, chiefly in connexion with the various branches of the linen manufacture.

5. The rock formation of the Ballymena country is volcanic, basalt occupying the greater part of the area, and porphyry and some other allied rocks occurring to a smaller extent.

In the basaltic series, beautiful iron ore is found, which is worked at several points here and in the adjoining Union of Larne, and shipped to England for the improvement of power fires.

Over the greater part of the district the volcanic rocks are covered with boulder clay and drift gravel, and between the ridges of gravel, which occur in the lower part of the country, as well as on the higher lying mountain cherts, there is a good deal of peat. There is also a considerable development of alluvial formation in the valleys of the Braid and Maine in the central part of the Union, and on the bank of the Bann, near Yoonie, to the west.

So far as I observed, there is no limestone in the Union, but an abundant supply is obtained from the Larne and Ballymoney districts, where the chalk is well developed.

6. The soil, in the lower ranges of country, consists of gravelly loam and clay loam of varying texture, the prevailing colour of both being red, due to the presence of iron. In the higher parts, the soil is of a heavier and colder description, and in many places stony and wet, and in such districts tillage is not so much practised as formerly, the land being better adapted for pasture and rough meadow.

In Appendix B, the electoral divisions of the Union are divided into groups, No. 1 containing seven divisions valued at upwards of 1*l*. per acre, and No. 2, seven valued at over 1*l*. and under 1*l*. 10*s*.

These two groups lie in the central and southern part of the Union, and together form a large district of productive agricultural land. The former group, however, con-

tains nearly all the towns and villages, and the greater number of the manufacturing establishments.

Group No. 3 contains four divisions, valued at from 1*l*. to 1*l*. 10*s*. per acre, and lying to the north of the Union. These are higher in elevation than the preceding, and of a somewhat poorer class of arable land, while the fourth group comprises five divisions valued under 1*l*. 10*s*., which lie on the eastern boundary of the Union, and all contain a considerable proportion of high-lying mountain, with arable on the lower slopes and in the intervening valleys.

Some of the peaks in this section rise to an altitude of 1,390 to 1,400 feet, and one to 1,782 feet.

7. I am indebted to the kindness of the clerk of the Union, who prepared the following analysis of the agricultural holdings in three electoral divisions, which may be regarded as typical of the middle and western part of the Union:—

Electoral Division.	Arable acres.	Gr. to 100	Gr. to 200	Gr. to 300	Over 300
Ballybeg	16	33	22	40	17
Claghwater	14	33	22	34	9
Glenaherry	14	35	110	12	14
Total	154	105	154	153	40

Looking at the agricultural population of the whole Union,* as embodied in the census returns of 1891, there were at that date 4,685 farmers and grassers, and 1,584 sons and other male relatives above 16 years of age residing with them, while the agricultural labourers, including cottagers, shopkeepers, indoor farm servants—male and female—and "others" connected with agriculture, were 26, numbered 2,633.

It is therefore clearly a district in which the majority of the farmers require little or no help outside of their own families, and where many of them have not sufficient employment on their farms, and therefore take outside work, or employ their spare time in weaving.

8. The method of farming varies according to the size of the holding.

On the small farms the ancient method of planting potatoes on grass land is adopted. After rearing a thin sod, the manure or compost is spread, the sods laid on it, and the furrows deeply trenched with the spade.

The same method of planting is practised by the labourers and other cottagers who have potato grounds, except on the larger farms, where they are often planted with the plough.

On the larger holdings the most modern implements are used, and the tillage is good. Lure is largely employed in the form of compost, and is doubtless very beneficial to the soil and of this district.

The crops most grown are oats, flax, turnips, and potatoes. Butter is generally made and calves reared till a year old, and a great many pigs are kept. The larger farmers house-keep cattle for beef, and on some choice pastures beef is also fed in summer.

Sheep are but little kept, except on the higher hills, where there are some flocks of the hardy Scotch breed.

The Union is essentially a tillage country, and, owing to the small size of so many of the holdings, a great deal of work is done by the spade.

9. Employments other than agricultural have a special importance in this Union. For centuries this district and the county of Antrim generally has been a chief seat of the linen manufacture, and Ballymena was celebrated for the

* Appendix A.

R.—FALL
BALYNA-
KERRA.

fine texture of its hand-made goods before the introduction of machinery for spinning and weaving.

When the domestic manufacture of linen was at its height in Ulster, the families of the smaller farmers were almost all engaged in spinning and weaving, and many of the larger farms were sub-let in small takes to families who grew their own flax, spun and wove it at home, and sold the linen to the bleacher without the intervention of a middleman, and thus a great amount of comfort and prosperity was diffused, the domestic linen manufacture being undoubtedly the foundation of the prosperity of the North of Ireland.

When machinery for spinning and weaving were introduced, the districts which made coarse linen were first affected, and gradually gave up the manufacture, while places like Ballymena, where fine cloth was produced were still recently able to compete with the power loom.

The great improvements made of late years in the power loom, have, however, forced down the wages of the hand-loom weaver, and only those who make the very finest qualities of cloth have now remunerative employment.

Still a great number, both of men and women, hold on to the trade, the village of Aghgill, and the districts of Portlough, Clontarf, Galgerna, Kinnemois, and some others being full of weavers, but it appears evident from the low rate of their wages, that as the power loom is perfected this branch of business will die out.

It is at present attended with one advantage only, that it allows of the people working in their own homes, and where there or four are working in the same house, they can live in comfort, but where a young family are depending on the wages of one weaver, they are nearly off.

There is a large flax spinning mill in Ballymena, the property of the Ballymena Flax Spinning Company, which employs altogether about 1,100 hands, of whom about 200 are men, 700 women, and 200 half-timers.

There are several linen weaving factories, the largest, the Ballymena, employing about 50 men and 200 women, another 30 men and 120 women, and others smaller.

The branch of the linen business which has taken most complete hold of the Ballymena district, is, however the bleaching, and finishing or drying.

These establishments are numerous, being situated at the best waterfalls over the Union the largest works being at Larnahilly, Hillmount, Peasbury, and Moorfield, and there are many of smaller size. Of the Larnahilly works the *Irish Times* Journal gives the following account:—

"The buildings are valued at 16,000, the machinery at 25,000, and the stock on hand in process of work, at 40,000."

"Over 200 hands are employed, and the workers are spoken of as being a sober, sobered, and industrious people. In connection with the bleaching, 110 double beating engines are kept constantly employed. The weekly turn-out is over 1,500 pieces, which is believed to be the largest quantity turned out by any similar works in the kingdom."

Further large extensions in connection with both bleaching and drying works are in contemplation.

"The motive power is supplied by three breast wheels and one turbine, the latter capable of driving up to 80 horse power, the water power is supplemented by steam."

"There is an abundant supply of water for driving purposes, and a large spring dries and several artesian wells afford an endless supply for other uses. The electric light has been recently introduced, and adds much to the attractiveness of this extensive and prosperous concern."

There are also iron mines, wooden factories, extensive flour mills, a foundry employing 70 men, and numerous smaller miscellaneous works, but enough has perhaps been said to show that this is a district of very varied industries, affording employment to a large population.

10 Ballymena is the only town of importance in the Union. In 1881, it had a population of 5,666, and being surrounded by a wide district of tillage country it has excellent markets for agricultural produce on three days in the week.

Its large trade adds largely to the importance of the town, and no one can fail to be impressed by the busy and thriving appearance of the place and its people.

Other towns and villages in the Union, over 500 population are Aghgill, Portlough, and Broughshane, and those under 500, Gravelly, Cullybackey, Kells, Ballysullivan, Claghanna, Tuross, Galgerna, and some others.

There are also some very populous townlands which are not classed as villages, not having at any place a group of twenty houses.

Such are Galgerna Park, Larnahilly, and Tullaghawakey, and some others in the neighbourhood of Ballymena which contain a very dense population.

I.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR

11. Employers, who have favoured me with returns, are divided in opinion as to the sufficiency of the supply of agricultural labour, about one half stating that the supply is sufficient in the localities they represent, and the others saying that with them it is insufficient.

There is no very sharp line distinguishing the hand-loom weaver from the agricultural labourer,* and as the weaver and not so highly paid as formerly, they are not only willing but anxious to take employment from the farmers; and members of the weaver's families, where they are not near a factory, are often employed as indoor farm servants. Sometimes the father or brother works as a regular farm labourer, while the females weave.

There is a tendency with all classes of labourers to move towards factories, where whole families can find regular employment, and it is not uncommon in some parts of the Union to find that the able-bodied men are working at a distance from home, while the females and older men remain at home, at the loom, or at the farm work.

The only place where I heard very distinct complaints as to want of employment was the village of Broughshane, where the Sergeant of Constabulary and others informed me that many of the men of that village were employed in Belfast, Glasgow, and other large centres, and that women and half-timers walked daily to the Ballymena factories, a distance of two miles. There was formerly a large spinning factory near this village, but it has not been working for some years, and the families appear to have remained, in the hope of its being re-opened, an expectation which is about soon to be realised.

12. The supply of agricultural labour has decreased since 1881, but this has been alleviated by the transition state of the weaver trade, already alluded to in paragraph 11.

13. There is no immigration, the tendency being the other way, many of the best men going to large centres, and a good many emigrating. As one farmer puts it, "Strong and vigorous men leave the place, and we have to work with the young and old."

14. There is a general consensus of opinion, which leaves no room to doubt that the efficiency of the agricultural labourers in this district is inferior to that of their predecessors. Mr. Raphael says, "There is not the same amount of work done in a day as formerly." Mr. Donmore says, "The supply is insufficient and of inferior quality." Mr. Owen says, "They are not so efficient as formerly, on account of the hard labour." Mr. Craig, P.L.G., says they "are not so good." Mr. Larnach thinks the efficiency is "decreasing," and Mr. Bankhead says, "Compared with former times, I do not consider the labourers so efficient, but believe they are about equal to the average of other districts." Mr. Carson, a very intelligent farmer upwards of 80 years of age, says, "No man could now be got for any money to do the same work as well as it was done sixty years ago."

Now employers express my opinion as to the efficiency compared with other districts. Mr. Owen says, that it is "nearly the same as other districts," thus agreeing with Mr. Bankhead, while Mr. Craig says the supply is "better and cheaper than in other districts."

My own impression is that the farm labourers here are not up to the mark either in physique or in skill of the men in the Larnahilly Union, and the reason is that the numerous competing industries employ the ablest of the population. I met, however, a few labourers of marked intelligence, notably one who had been induced to leave a good place at a blacksmith and return to farm labour by the offer of exceptional wages, 24s a year, with comfortable board and lodging.

Once the skin are very rare, the older and most experienced men almost all wishing to settle near the factories, where they have a better chance of improving their own position, and of starting their families in life, with a prospect of rising.

II.—CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT.

15. Employment in most cases is continuous, but in some it is casual.

There is considerable diversity here, as elsewhere, in the methods of engagement.

On the residential places of the gentry and on a very few large farms men are engaged by the year, living in cottages on the place, sometimes at a rent and sometimes free, but in the great majority of cases engagements, both of outdoor and indoor men, are by the half year, the term times being May and November.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
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* Appendix C, volume 12.

† Appendix C, volume 13.

There is also a class of casual labourers, including some of the hand-loom weavers, who work on farms during busy seasons, and return to the loom during the slack time of the year.

A large employer says, "The hand-loom industry was very largely followed here, and that always maintained a supply of labour for farmers, when they required an increase. In the last 30, 35, and 40 years, there have been a gradually decreasing number of persons employed in hand-loom weaving, and that is producing a diminished supply of labour for farmers."

The usual hours of work are in summer from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. with two hours for meals, or from 7 a.m. till 6 p.m., breakfasting before going out and having an hour for dinner.

In winter the hours of the ordinary labourer are regulated by the length of daylight, but the cottagers and women have little difference in winter, coming before daylight to feed.

One rather large farmer states he has to all the year to be from 6 a.m. till 6.30 p.m. with two hours and twenty minutes for meals, meals work being provided until daylight in winter, there being water power on the holding. Another says the hours in his neighbourhood are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one hour for dinner, or 11 hours work, but 10 hours in the general time, and 8 in winter.

About one-third of the labourers are employed on Sunday on the large farms, and on those it is customary for the men to take Sunday work in turn, and on smaller holdings a member of the family takes his turn with the under servant.

III.—WAGES AND EARNINGS.

17. The current rate of wages in this Union for farm labourers constantly employed runs from 5s. to 12s. a week, with perquisites in some cases. Mr. O'Brien mentions 14s. a week, but is travelling over the district I met with no such case, and I consider this refers to casual labour at busy seasons. On the first accidental place I visited 10 men are employed, all of whom are small tenants, or their sons living in the neighbourhood, and have the wages to 5s. a week, wet and dry, for the ordinary man jobbing on the farm, and 10s. for a ploughman, cattleman, and cartman.

On another proprietor's place I found 10s. and 12s. paid, and on another 10s. and 11s. with perquisites, but on several farms 8s. and a cottage and garden; 9s., wet and dry, without perquisites, and 5s. and a cottage are the prevailing rates for constant men.

A good indoor man gets from 18s. to 20s. and his board and lodging, and I met with one case where a very superior man has 24s. a year, but this is quite exceptional.

Farmers who find their day labourers give from 1s. to 1s. 3d. a day with food upon a half-penny halpenny, and sometimes a cottage is thrown in, but in most cases a small rent is paid for the cottage.

The casual labourer gets 1s. a day and his food in winter, 2s. during potato planting and reaping, and from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. during the summer months.

Scotchmen in the employment of the road contractors earn 10s. a week all the year, carters at the farmers, 12s.; railway surface-men, 12s.; and those attached to a travelling gang, 13s.; labourers at black fields and other factories in the country districts from 10s. to 13s.; and quarrymen, 12s. a week.

18. There is not much employment by piece-work in this locality. Draining and draining are sometimes done, and the planting of potatoes by the spade is subcontracted for occasionally. The prices quoted by experienced farmers for these jobs are, ditching, 2s. 6d. a perch; making drains, 1s. a perch; and potato planting, 1s. 10s. per Irish acre, equal to about 1s. 1d. per statute acre.

19. Regular labourers do not get any allowance in hay-time or harvest, but casual labourers earn considerably increased wages, men getting for a few weeks 3s. a day, and women about 2s. while engaged in the hay and grain harvest.

20. Mr. Gaston estimates the annual earnings of a labourer in his neighbourhood at 12l. and board, or about 25l. in all. Mr. Drummond's estimate is 31l. Mr. Javon's, "4s. a week and food" would represent 25l. 12s., while Mr. Craig's estimate is 24l. to 26l., and for horsemen and cattlemen 31l. to 34l. Mr. Lambert gives 35l.; Mr. Casson, 26l. to 28l.; and Dr. Picken 26l. to 30s., as their estimates.

21. A large proportion of the hand-loom weavers are women and elderly men, many of the younger men having gone to other occupations, or emigrated, owing to the low rate of wages. For the ordinary classes of lives, with

which the power loom competes, wages are very low, about 16s. to 20s. being paid for weaving 60 yards, and the men often come out five or six yards more, for which there is no extra pay. Allowing for the time spent in going for the yarn and returning the cloth to the mill-dresser or "draper" as they call him here, about three weeks is usual to be spent on the web, and the weekly wages of this class of worker would therefore be from five to seven shillings, which fully accounts for the fact that the weavers are glad to take farm work when they can get it.

There is, however, a small class of superior weavers who are better paid, being engaged in making goods of exceptional quality, with which the power loom as yet cannot compete. A man of this class told me he got 2l. 6s. for weaving 60 yards of 34" hane, and as added, "It takes the work of a month to put it on and cut."

The hand-loom of a few men was much benefited by the weaving trade while it was better paid than at present, as a great home employment to his family, and the older men and girls of this class still spend part of their time in weaving, while the young men go to service or to work in factories.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

22. There is an ample supply of cottages in the Ballymena Union, but the greatest variety of accommodations.

The older cottages are built of stone and lime and are detached, and in the summer parts of the country some of them are very poor.

A rather common form consists of a kitchen and weaving room, or a house with two ends, as they say here—one of which has a bed and the other a loom in the corner, if there is a family there is a bed and a loom in each apartment.

Other ancient cottages have "three ends," the centre one being the kitchen, and at one end the weaving room, containing from two to four looms, and at the other, one large or two small bedrooms.

Here and there a cottage is seen with one "end" only, and in some cases it has a bed in one corner and a loom in another.

This form is happily somewhat rare, and confined to the more backward parts.

23. At several places in the union, there are, however, cottages of a highly improved character, and in the town of Ballymena great improvement in this direction has taken place of late years.

At Galsburgh, the Right Hon. John Young, a resident proprietor, has built a large number of superior cottages, some of which are occupied by the labourers on the home farm, and the remainder are let to the workmen employed at the numerous works in the neighbourhood.

One block has the following accommodation:—Porch, 4 x 6; kitchen, 15 x 12; scullery, 9 x 7; two bedrooms, each 9 x 12, and a bedroom, 12 x 12 above stairs, with a well-walled yard containing a piggy, w.e., and a coal store, and a road (Irish) of garden, equal to 1 rood and 24 perches, the rent being 4l. 10s. per annum.

At Farnaghy, Mr. Wm. Young has some very good cottages, well situated, well built, and with excellent sanitary arrangements. They have a kitchen, bedroom, and parlor below, and three bedrooms above stairs, with excellent enclosed yard and w.e., and about 30 perches of garden at the rear, and a grass plot in front.

At Glenduff, Mr. Patrick, a resident proprietor, has excellent cottages for his use, containing on the ground floor a kitchen and bedroom, each 15 x 12, and a scullery at the rear, with two bedrooms upstairs 15 x 12 and 15 x 9. To each cottage is attached a nice walled yard, with piggy and sanitary accommodation, and a small garden.

At Carrington, I saw two very nice cottages, one of which, belonging to Mr. Cathcart, I examined. It contains, on ground floor, a kitchen 15 x 14 and bedroom 15 x 10, with two bedrooms above of similar dimensions; the rent, with potato ground, being 3l. 6s.

At Ballylough there is a block of seven tolerable cottages, with kitchen 14 x 12 and bedroom 14 x 8 below, and one large apartment above, but defective as to rear accommodation: the rent 2s. per week.

At Lessor, Mr. McCoy has three nice cottages, also defective in the rear, containing kitchen 14 x 12, bedroom 14 x 12, 14 x 8, and 14 x 8; the rent 1s. 6d. per week.

24. In the town of Ballymena there are some rather poor labourers' dwellings, but much has been done of late years to improve them, and some of the newer blocks are most tasteful and comfortable.

The Ballymena Spinning Company has a very nice property of 29 houses called Patrick's Place, each of which contains a kitchen 12 x 10, with range, a bedroom 10 x 8,

Improved
cottages.

Cottages in
Ballymena
town.

E-VIII.
RAILWAY
STATION.

passy 9x4, and scullery 6x5 with water laid on, below stairs, with two comfortable bedrooms above stairs, a yard with perfect drainage and sanitary arrangements, at the moderate rent of 2r 6d a week.

In James' Street, Alfred Street, and Lons Street, there are also very superior workmen's houses, at rents from 2r to 3r 6d a week, while on Gleason Road, a new block have each four good apartments and an attic, with every modern improvement, at rents of 3r 6d a week. In Engage Lane there are also excellent four-roomed houses at 3r a week, and in Galgoun Street, Mr. Morton, a stone mason, has a number of comfortable four-roomed cottages, with good sanitary arrangements, at 2r a week.

A very different class of dwellings is to be found in other streets, for example, in Railway Street, where a large block of indifferent cottages, containing on the ground floor a kitchen 12x10 and bedroom 12x8, with kitchen floor, and having one low over-cupboard bedroom above, are let at 2r a week. These cottages have no back doors, and no attempt at drainage or sanitary arrangements, and yet they are always occupied and in great demand, being situated close to two weaving factories, and beside the foundry and railway station.

At Alexander Street, Clabber Street, Stone's Court, and Fairchild Street, there are also some rather poor old houses, but taking it all round, the sanitary condition of the town is better than any of those I have previously visited.

35. The small towns and villages in the Union exhibit great variety.

Portglenone, population 575, lies on the border of and partly in the county of Londonderry, and is mostly inhabited by shopkeepers and tradespeople. It has no factory near it, but there are a great many handloom weavers in the neighbourhood.

Alaghall, population 385, is a town of weavers and factory workers, and their houses are generally subspatial, plain buildings, one and a half and two stories high, with a kitchen and weaving room below stairs and two bedrooms above, and on one side of the street they have strips of garden. These houses, being comparatively modern, with decent roofs, would be fairly comfortable, if provided with enclosed yards, and suitable sanitary arrangements, to which there is no pretence.

Broughshane is an old village, which has apparently seen better days.

The houses are generally thatched, and consist of a kitchen and bedroom on the ground floor, and a loft half a story high, above, and there is no attempt at rear accommodation. Small gardens are rather common here, and the rents on farms 1s. 6d. to 2s. without a garden, and from 2s. 6d. to 3s. with a garden. The population of this village in 1891 was 575.

Greenhill (211) is the property of the "United Recorders" or "Manorists," and is a beautiful village, with every appearance of prosperity and comfort.

Cullybacky (235) is perhaps the poorest village in the Union, none of the cottages being extremely bad, but the mill property has been recently acquired by Mr. Wm. Young of Fenagh, and, as a resident expressed himself, "He will soon put the place in order."

The village of Galgoun, population 205, is a very different sort of property. It is on the estate of Mr. John Young, Deputy Lieutenant, who has built excellent labourers' houses both here and on Galgoun Park.

One block of labourers' houses in this village contain a kitchen 14x12, a bedroom 12x8, a scullery and pantry below, and two good bedrooms above, with enclosed yard containing two and a half acres.

The villages of Clagh, Charlestown, and Newtown Comynella, in the northern part of the Union, and Toms in the south, do not call for any special remarks, having scarcely any labouring population.

Kells, population 241, is not very well off for cottages, many being without a back door, or any yard accommodation. It is, however, a very busy and prosperous little place, with a woollen mill and several distilling works in the immediate neighbourhood.

36. In the rural districts there are worse cottages than in the villages.

To the north of Ballymena, at Kinnegalla, Cullyswatten and Kinnis, some of the worst are to be found.

Bellea, a road-labourer, his wife, and five children, from 11 downs, have a one-roomed cottage about 18x16, for which, and a little potato ground, he pays 2s. 3d.

Another surface man pays 1s. a week for a cottage 16x16, and a bit of potato ground, and Penny, a free labourer, has one 16x15, in the same locality. At Kinnis I saw a cottage of one apartment 18x12, at Carnalee one 20x15, used as kitchen, weaving room and bedroom, and held with a road of potato ground, at 2s. 15s. a year. At Toms another, 16x15, is used in a similar way, and one at

Ballyswenny 18x15. At Ballydonally there are three cottages with a single apartment in each, about 16x16, held at 16s. a week each.

These are the worst specimens of cottages that I saw in the Union, but some others are only slightly better, and there is every variety to be met with up to the modern four-roomed cottages described in paragraph 25.

37. The Board of Guardians, as the Local Authority, built in 1890-1 12 cottages under the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts.

They are situated in four distinct divisions, are built in pairs, and have half an acre of garden attached to each cottage.

The following is a summary of the statement of expenditure on these cottages:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Preliminary expenses	-	46	6	0		
Architect's fees	-	16	16	0		
Architect's fees	-	23	19	6		
Legal expenses	-	150	0	0		
				237	1	6
Sites and interests	-	230	13	0		
Fencing, gates &c.	-	93	0	8		
				323	13	8
Contracts for building	-	359	3	4		
				359	3	4
Total expenditure	-	1,509	18	3		

or an average per cottage of 125l. 18s. 6d.

Of this sum 17s. 4s. 9d. per cottage was provided by parliamentary grant, leaving the owner repayable out of the rates 107l. 15s. 9d. for each cottage.

These cottages contain four rooms, a kitchen and weaving room on the ground floor, each 17x11, and two apartments upstairs of the same floor space, half a story high at intervals, and over-cupboard, also a small porch, but there is no outhouse attached except a w.c. The rent charged is 1s. 6d. a week.

V.—GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS.

38. Gardens are generally small, and a good many have none. Some are as small as five or six perches, some are fifteen, or twenty perches, while on some large residential farms they are about a rood, and in very rare cases more.

The cultivation is generally confined to potatoes and cabbages.

There are no allotments.

39. Potato grounds appear to be given liberally to the poor community employed, the limit generally being the ability of the labourer to manure, and that of course largely depending on the live stock he keeps.

The weaver who rents a cottage in the country districts generally has potato ground attached to his house, but in less of that he is often bound to work for the owner of the cottage at busy seasons.

40. There are no cow pastures, and I heard of no cows kept by small tenants in the Union except in the occasional parts, where it is used for herds to have the privilege of grazing stock, as part of wages.

41. The live stock kept by the labourer and the weaver in this Union is generally confined to pigs and poultry, but some cases a goat is kept, but does not take.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES

42. I heard of no benefit societies among the agricultural labourers, but one campaign reports that there is a considerable business done in the insurance of the lives of children, which he speaks of with disapproval. The railway labourers, however, nearly all subscribe to the funds of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

VII.—TRADE UNIONS.

43. Trade Unions of agricultural labourers are also quite unknown in this district.

VIII.—GENERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

44. The general relations between the employers and the labourers appear to have been very good in the past, and, as a rule, are reported to be so still, but some dissatisfaction is reported as existing in certain localities, and I heard complaints from several labourers that the farmers did not care how they were treated, and that they did not enter so much labour in winter as formerly.

This is doubtless true, so farmers see all complaining of the depression, and the difficulty of paying their way, so that the tendency is to do with as little outside labour as possible.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURERSCottages
built under
the Labour
Act, 1890.

Gardens.

Allotments.
Potato
grounds.No cow
pastures.

Live stock.

Benefit
Societies.No Trade
Unions.General
relations
between
farmers and
labourers, &c.

IX.—THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

85 All employers are agreed that the general condition of the agricultural labourer is better than in the past, and one says, "the agricultural labourer" is very much more "independent in many cases than his employer in this neighbourhood."

Another says, "The general condition of the agricultural labourer is not such as I would like to see it, but how it is to be improved is the great difficulty. There is a gradual improvement, though slow, going on, as it is very much better than it was 40 or 50 years ago."

Another employer says, "A small majority of the working classes who do agricultural labour at certain seasons, are also engaged and have their families employed at hand-loom weaving during the remainder of the time, and their condition depends chiefly on how the weaving trade is paying; but those who are entirely engaged in agricultural labour are in a fairly comfortable position at present."

In this connection I may quote the statement of Mr. John Young, D.L., of Galgoun Castle, before the Boshersburgh Commission, as contained in the abstract of evidence prepared by Mr. Little:—

"Labourers partly agricultural, partly linen weavers; they hold cottiers' houses under the farmers, for which they pay 1s. or 1s. 6s. a week with a right to plant a few ridges of potatoes. Works satisfactorily, except for the wretchedness of the hovels they live in, and had sanitary arrangements of every sort. They are better off than purely agricultural labourers."

The weaver is not so well paid now as when Mr. Young

gave his evidence 17 years ago, but it is still applicable to the mixed character of the employment, and also expresses very strongly the want of proper cottage accommodation, which is, I think, the greatest grievance of the majority of agricultural labourers and weavers in the union.

Before concluding I may refer to the situation of pauperism in the union.

By reference to the returns for the year ended 25th March 1865, it appears that—exclusive of lunatics transferred from Belfast Asylum, the average daily number of inmates in the workhouse amounted to only 35 per cent. of the population, and that there were, at the end of the year, 502 persons, or about 1·4 per cent. of the population in receipt of out-door relief.

It would be unfair, however, to conclude that the rather large number receiving out-door relief indicates a worse state of affairs here than in other districts: to my mind it is rather an indication that those "permanently disabled by" "poison of age and infirmity" are treated with some consideration here, and not forced into the workhouse, which is very distasteful to many of the poor in this part of Ireland.

In conclusion, it appears probable that the population of this district will continue to decrease, owing to the change in the weaving industry to which reference has been already made, and during the transition to power-loom weaving, which is only a question of time, the older weavers, who are unfit for other occupations, may be but poorly employed, and the younger members of their families may move to towns or emigrate, and thus render labour scarcer than at present for farmers; but in the meantime there is an abundant supply of labour in most parts of the union.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) R. McCRAE,
(Assistant Commissioner).

* Appendix C, column 1.
1 - - - 17
2 - - - 17

APPENDIX A

EXTRACTS FROM CENSUS RETURNS as to Occupations.

Occupations.	Number in 1881.	Number in 1891.	Increase.	Decrease.
Farmer, grazer, male - - - -	4,540	4,018	—	522
" " female - - - -	637	667	30	—
Farmer's, grazer's—son, grandson, brother, nephew	1,222	1,284	62	—
Agricultural labourer (outstayer) - - - -	1,835	1,632	—	203
" " female - - - -	134	201	67	—
Shepherd - - - -	24	24	—	—
Farm servant, indoor, male - - - -	283	477	194	—
" " female - - - -	129	77	—	52
Oxman connected with agriculture - - - -	45	39	—	6
General labourer, male - - - -	628	512	—	116
" " female - - - -	35	35	—	—
Road labourer - - - -	49	32	—	17
Railway labourer - - - -	37	45	8	—
Dist. manufacturer, male - - - -	2,734	1,909	—	825
" " female - - - -	4,164	3,354	—	810
Tramway driver - - - -	207	124	—	83
Engine driver, not railway, marine, nor agricultural	35	67	32	—
Factory labourer, undefined - - - -	17	22	5	—
" " female - - - -	77	32	—	45
Weaver—undefined—male - - - -	89	25	—	64
" " female - - - -	230	22	—	208
Dyer, calenderer, &c., male - - - -	49	22	—	27
Carter - - - -	65	23	—	42

APPENDIX B.

POPULATION, AREA, and VALUATION of the Electoral Divisions.

Group.	Electoral Division.	Population, 1891.	Area	Valuation.	Last Rate made.
1.	Alghoth - - - -	3,444	5,000 3 12	5,444 11 0	6d
Valuation upwards of 10s. per acre	Bolton - - - -	16,521	5,835 3 5	20,329 12 0	1s
	Broughshane - - - -	5,741	5,290 0 14	7,644 12 0	6d
	Coleport - - - -	5,114	7,325 2 24	5,644 12 0	7d
	Kells - - - -	1,966	5,955 0 31	5,374 10 0	7d
	Partridge - - - -	5,628	5,717 3 15	5,244 4 0	10d
	Teane - - - -	1,562	4,707 3 12	5,223 15 0	9d
2.	Ballynag - - - -	1,932	7,670 3 14	5,666 17 0	6d
Valuation from 10s. to 15s. per acre	Ballynacorney - - - -	1,744	3,872 1 23	3,287 10 0	5d
	Ballynacorney - - - -	2,678	3,351 2 10	4,022 17 0	5d
	Claghogue - - - -	9,246	5,477 2 12	4,271 10 0	9d
	Drumcree - - - -	1,622	3,795 2 30	4,611 12 0	10d
	Drumcree - - - -	2,125	3,470 3 38	4,167 10 0	6d
	Kilbarrack - - - -	2,107	3,448 1 14	4,256 10 0	10d
3.	Clagh - - - -	2,628	7,776 3 11	4,759 17 0	7d
Valuation from 10s. to 15s. per acre	Dundrum - - - -	771	3,407 2 4	1,736 0 0	6d
	Glenbrook - - - -	1,475	5,745 1 5	5,245 2 0	8d
	Lansdowne - - - -	2,540	5,918 3 25	4,667 10 0	7d
4.	Glenbrook - - - -	1,241	7,379 3 3	5,282 0 0	10d
Valuation under 10s. per acre	Glenbrook - - - -	1,484	11,254 3 15	3,434 0 0	6d
	Lansdowne - - - -	1,273	14,635 3 10	3,820 12 0	8d
	Northwood - - - -	1,287	9,225 1 0	5,544 15 0	1s
	Shank - - - -	2,216	15,675 0 11	4,234 19 0	7d

APPENDIX C.

REVIEWS FROM EMPLOYERS TO BALLYMENA UNION.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	Mr. S. Gahan, P.L.O.	Mr. John Donohoe, K.D.	Mr. Francis Owens, P.L.O.	Mr. Allen J. O'Sullivan, Chas.	Mr. Robert O'Connell, P.L.O.	Mr. M. Leonard, P.L.O.
a. The supply of labour.	Supply sufficient. About 18 per cent. increase in wages. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly.	There is a steady decrease in the quantity of labour during the year. The supply is not so good as it was some years back. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	The supply of farm labour is not sufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Supply sufficient in 1901. A decrease in 1902. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Supply sufficient. Decline in 1902. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Supply sufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.
b. Conditions of employment.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Employment, supply. Improvement in 1901. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.
c. Wages and emigration.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	Current wages, 10s. 6d. and 10s. 10d. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.
d. Cottages or dormitories.	There is a steady decrease in the quantity of labour during the year. The supply is not so good as it was some years back. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	The cottages are poor and insufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	More cottages than required. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	The supply of cottages is sufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	The supply of cottages is sufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.	The supply of cottages is sufficient. No emigration. Not so much labour as formerly. The supply is not so good as it was some years back.

Returns from Employers in Ballymena Union—continued.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Mr. S. Gurney, P.L.O.	Mr. John Cummins, Kells	Mr. Francis O'Neill, P.L.O.	Mr. John, J. Cummins, Cough	Mr. Robert O'Connell, P.L.O.	Mr. W. Harcourt, P.L.O.
4. Gardens, cultivation, etc.	The garden attached to cottage is in good cultivation and is well kept. There are no weeds.	There is a small garden. There is no cultivation in the garden.	There are gardens attached to the cottages. They are well kept. There is no cultivation in the garden.	There is a garden of 10 or 15 perches attached to some cottages. There are no weeds.	Gardens are not always attached to cottages. They are not in the best condition. There are no weeds.	Gardens are not in the best condition. There are no weeds.
5. Poultry	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.	Poultry are kept by farmers, but not by the cottagers.
6. Livestock	The live stock kept on the farm is as follows:	No live stock.	The live stock kept on the farm is as follows:	The live stock kept on the farm is as follows:	The live stock kept on the farm is as follows:	The live stock kept on the farm is as follows:
7. Roads and drains	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.
8. Trade	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.
9. General condition of the town	Slight deterioration in general condition.	General condition is good, but not as good as it was some years ago.	General condition is good, but not as good as it was some years ago.	General condition is good, but not as good as it was some years ago.	General condition is good, but not as good as it was some years ago.	General condition is good, but not as good as it was some years ago.
10. General condition of the town	Better than in the past.	The general condition of the town is better than it was some years ago.	The general condition of the town is better than it was some years ago.	The general condition of the town is better than it was some years ago.	The general condition of the town is better than it was some years ago.	The general condition of the town is better than it was some years ago.

Returns from Employers in Bullymer Union—continued.

	2.	5.	6.	10.	11.	12.
	Mr. John Burdett, R.L.D.	Mr. R. Crane, Andover.	Dr. Parker, Bury.	Arthur, Bishop, Esq., Agent to the Right Hon. John Lubbock.	Poor Law Guardian (not a tenant).	A large Employer (not a tenant).
1. The supply of labour is abundant.	The supply of labour is not abundant. It is not abundant in the last 12 or 15 years. There is no improvement in the supply of labour. I do not remember the labourers to be any better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.	A long time ago, the supply of labour was abundant. It was abundant in the last 12 or 15 years. There is no improvement in the supply of labour. I do not remember the labourers to be any better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The supply of labour is not abundant. It is not abundant in the last 12 or 15 years. There is no improvement in the supply of labour. I do not remember the labourers to be any better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.	Labourers get on as well as they can. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	There is no supply of labour to be had. The supply of labour is not abundant. It is not abundant in the last 12 or 15 years. There is no improvement in the supply of labour. I do not remember the labourers to be any better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The present supply of labour is not abundant. It is not abundant in the last 12 or 15 years. There is no improvement in the supply of labour. I do not remember the labourers to be any better than they were 10 or 15 years ago.
2. Condition of the labourer.	Almost all the labourers in the district are employed by me. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	Employment is not as good as it was 10 or 15 years ago. The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	Employment is not as good as it was 10 or 15 years ago. The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	Most of the labourers are employed by me. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	Labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	When men are employed by me, they are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.
3. When and where.	The general state of labour is not as good as it was 10 or 15 years ago. The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.
4. Other remarks.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.	The labourers are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago. They are not as well off as they were 10 or 15 years ago.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. M C C R E A
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

UPON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF CASTLEBLAYNEY
(COUNTIES OF ARMAGH AND MONAGHAN).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

TO GEORGEY DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

George House, Stephens,
May 1892

1. I have the honour to submit the following as my report on the supply of labour and the condition of the agricultural labourer in the Union of Castleblayney, Ireland.

2. I went to Castleblayney on the 14th March, and remained in the Union till the 31st. As on previous occasions, I communicated with the Board of Guardians before going to Castleblayney, and on the day after my arrival attended their weekly meeting and made a statement to the members as to the objects and scope of inquiry, at the same time distributing copies of Form III, and inviting the co-operation of the Board in obtaining information.

During the following fortnight I travelled over the Union, holding interviews with all the employers and labourers whom I could reach, and making a close examination of the labourers' cottages.

3. I have to acknowledge with thanks the kindness of several members of the Board of Guardians, and many other employers who sent me returns on Form III, 19 of which are placed in Appendix D. From Mr. McElroy, the constant clerk of the Union, I also received much assistance, and I have specially to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. De B. Fox, agent of the Hope Estate, who permitted me to go over the pay-rolls of the various departments of employes on the home farm and demesne, where extensive employment is given under his direction.

4. Castleblayney is an island Union, situated in the eastern part of the county Monaghan and the south-western part of county Armagh.

It lies the Unions of Monaghan and Armagh to the north, Newry to the east, Carrickmacross to the south, and Coothill to the west. The Great Northern Railway of Ireland traverses the Union, affording direct communication with the port of Dundalk.

5. The character of the country is lilly, with a good many lakes, and some bog and alluvial soil of limited area in the intervening valleys.

The prevailing rock formation over the whole Union is slate and shale of the lower Silurian series, tilted up at high angles, and covered to a considerable depth with gravel and clay, principally the latter. There is, so far as I observed, no limestone in the Union, the supply being brought from the neighbourhood of Carrickmacross.

From the appearance of some of the shales, it has been supposed that roofing slate might be found, and Mr. Hunter, under-agent on the Templeton Estate, informed me that extensive explorations had been made on that property, but that no workable slate had been discovered.

Lead ore is found in the northern part of the Union, and was formerly worked at several points by the Mining Company of Ireland and others, but the workings have been abandoned for many years.

As in many other districts, there is a tradition that coal exists in the Union, and was worked to a small extent in recent times, but I could not hear anything definite on the subject, except that trials had been made in the neighbouring Union of Newry, which had been disappointing.

6. The area of the Castleblayney Union is 94,300 acres, of which 36,080 acres, situate in the county Armagh, are valued at £1,351, or about 14s. an acre, while the county Monaghan part of the Union, containing 58,221 acres, is valued at £4,297, or about 17s. an acre.

Omitting four electoral divisions, in which the towns of Castleblayney (1,791), Bellaghy (1,376), Crossmaglen (756), and Narrovenhamilton (788) are situated, the electoral divisions in the Armagh side of the Union

vary in valuation from 10s. 8d. to 14s. 3d. an acre, and in the Monaghan part from 12s. 6d. to 16s. * so that it is evident that there is no block of very bad land in the Union, and very large areas of exceptional fertility.

7. The district forming the Castleblayney Union may be briefly described as lilly, fertile land, varying from medium to good quality, much of it rather heavy clay, better adapted for tillage than pasture.

The holdings generally are of small size. The clerk of the Union has kindly compiled from the rate-book an analysis of the ratings of agricultural holdings in three electoral divisions, from which it appears that, omitting fractions, 22 per cent. of the farms in those divisions are rated under 14, 35 per cent. between 14 and 20, 24 per cent. between 20 and 25, 7 per cent. between 25 and 30, and less than 1 per cent. over 30.

To illustrate this in another way, the Hope Estate, with an approximate rental of £10,000, has 608 agricultural tenants, besides householders in town, so that the average rent of the farms on it cannot be more than 8s., probably not so much.

8. The population of the Union, by the census returns of 1881, was 35,852, and in 1891 it had fallen to 28,374, a loss of 6,478, or 17.5 per cent.

By reference to Appendix A. it will be found that the number of farmers and gardeners, male and female, in 1881 was 4,791, and the number of their sons and other male relatives over 20 years of age 1,463, while the entire number of labourers, including agricultural cottagers, male and female, indoor farm-servants, male and female, and general labourers of both sexes amounted to 1,584, or scarcely one-third the number of farmers, and less than one-fourth of the number of farmers and their male relatives added.

From these figures and those stated in paragraph 7 it is evident not only that the great majority of the landholders in this Union require no outside help, but that in many cases their families have not sufficient employment at home, and therefore must go out and compete with the cottager, or engage in search of remunerative employment.

9. The method of farming varies with the size of the holdings. On the smallest class cultivation is done by the spade, and no regular rotation is followed, but the usual course pursued is to break up a piece of grass for potatoes and cabbage, which are followed by oats for one or two crops, and then by grass again.

On farms somewhat larger one horse is kept, and two neighbours plough and sometimes harrow by borrowing and lending horses, while on the larger farms a more systematic course is followed, the tillage being well done and the land fairly clean. Some of the best cultivators told me that there has been a tendency of late years to do the work with less help and in a rougher manner than formerly, owing to the depression under which tillage farmers have been labouring, and the necessity for keeping down expenses.

The usual crops are oats, flax, potatoes, turneps, and ryegrass—seed.

Dairy cows are kept and young cattle reared till a year and a year and a half old, and on the larger farms some Winter beef is fed, and pigs on all the small farms. There are but few sheep in the district, owing in part to the small size of the holdings, and partly to the heavy nature of the soil on the higher lying farms.

10. A system has grown up of late years on large farms, here and elsewhere, of sowing lettuce for one crop, the persons taking the lands being chiefly small farmers with strong families, or dwelling men about the towns. This practice, which has not been referred to in previous reports, has of late become much more

* See Appendix B.
† See Appendix C.

3-11.
UNITED
STATES.

prevalent than formerly, and is not regarded as a sign of prosperity in any district where it is commonly followed. The small farmer who has not sufficient employment at home for his family can easily work a few additional acres, and the straw enables him to keep additional winter stock, so that there is great competition, and high prices are obtained, but though yielding an immediate profit to the person letting, this practice is in the end exhausting, except in the immediate neighbourhood of a town where manure can be procured.

Employment
mostly other
than agricul-
tural.

11. Employment, other than agricultural, is very slight in the Castletown Union, and through the whole of the county Monaghan.

It is somewhat singular that manufacturing industries have made scarcely any headway here, while in the adjoining Unions of Armagh and Newry, and throughout almost the entire county of Armagh, there are numerous linen factories, some of them, such as Bushbrook, being among the most extensive in the kingdom. Towards some of these large factories, particularly Bushbrook, Darkey, and Keady, a portion of the labour of this Union gravitates, and I was told that there are still a few handloom weavers near the boundary of the Union who work for a factory at Keady, but I did not meet with any of them.

There was formerly a jute factory of some importance at Lough, in this Union, in consequence of which a village grew up, containing in 1881 a population of 364, but owing to a protracted strike, the works were discontinued, and the population of the village had fallen in 1891 to 180. This place is now occupied by an English company, who have introduced the weaving of twill, and most recently have started spinning. The managing director speaks hopefully as to the future of this industry, which it is intended to extend, but he complains that this and all other enterprises in inland situations are heavily handicapped by the high scale of charges on Irish railways.

There are at present 48 employed in these works, the majority of whom are girls.

Young girls are taken on at 6 a week; boys of 16 at 8s., labourers earn 12s., girls who have been trained to weave from 12s. to 17s., "finishers" 25s.; and the superintendent of looms, 32s. a week.

In the same neighbourhood there is a small huckster factory, which employs about 12 men and a few boys, the men being employed as piece-work, and earning about 12s. a week.

In the town of Castletown there is a small public dairy or creamery, which takes the milk of about 250 cows, and also handles and forwards the "bump" butter which is brought to market by the small farmers, who have not a sufficient supply to enable them to fill strikes, but the operations here are so limited as to be practically of no importance to the question of labour.

Breaks are made in the Union, but not on a large scale.

The foregoing are the only industries which I heard of, with the exception of the scutching mills, which abound in the Union, and some grain mills for oatmeal.

The flax-scouter is paid here, as elsewhere, by the piece, at the rate of 5d. per stone of clean fibre, in addition to which he gets a bounty of a pound or two at the beginning of the season, or sometimes a free house and garden in lieu of bounty.

His family are also employed at husking and scutching the flax-straw, but this employment lasts only about six months, and during the summer the scouter and his family are available for farm work.

THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

12. The supply of labour appears to be rather scarce in some parts of the Union during the busy season of the year, while in other districts it is quite abundant, and there is difficulty in obtaining employment in the winter months. Out of 127 returns received from employers, eight say that the supply is "sufficient," "abundant," or "more than sufficient," one gentleman says it is "barely sufficient," and three say that it is "insufficient." Mr. Conolly, P.L.C., says there is not constant employment to be had in the southern part of the Union. Mr. Wren, steward to R. C. Leslie, Esq., D.L., although employing 88 men and boys during the winter, says, "There was not a week since I have been here that men were not applying for employment," and Father Duffy corroborates this, saying "There is a great want of employment in the winter."

* Appendix B.

The number of labourers who are cottagers not holding land is very small in this Union, but their place is supplied by the small landholders and their families, as Mr. Gilmore,* in the eastern part of the Union, says, "Most of the labour on this district is done by men who hold small farms of from 2 to 8 acres, and are glad to work with the larger farmers. The cottager labourers here are very few and not required from the reason stated."

13. There has been a very considerable decrease in the labourer proper during the past 10 or 15 years. Looking at the census returns for 1881 and 1891, the number of agricultural labourers appears to have increased, but in a rural union like this I think there is no strict line drawn between the agricultural and the general labourer, and therefore I add together those two classes and the indoor farm-servants, with this result that there were in the Union in 1881 of these three classes combined, 2,054, and in 1891, 1,534, or exactly 25 per cent. of a decrease. This decrease is owing to emigration to America and the migration to the factory towns and to Scotland of many of the young men.

14. There is no immigration at any season, but on the contrary migration to large centres of employment and emigration to America and the colonies are constantly going on.

15. The majority of the employers who sent me returns, and many others to whom I spoke, are of opinion that there is a falling off in the efficiency of the labourers as compared with former times.

Mr. McKenna, who has a farm in the Union of Rathfriland, thinks the Castletown labourers are inferior to the men of that Union and of Dundalk, and Mr. Wren thinks that they are not so efficient as the men in county Londonderry, where he filled a situation before coming to Castletown.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

16. Employment is regular and continuous on the home farms and demesnes of the few gentry in the district and on a portion of the larger farmers' places. The indoor farm-servants have, of course, continuous employment, but there are also a good many casual labourers both among the cottagers and the small landholders who are employed chiefly in busy seasons and are often idle in winter. The larger farmer who has no cottages on his holding generally employs one or two indoor men round the year, and is dependent on casual labourers at busy seasons.

17. The engagements of indoor servants are by the half-year, the term times being May and November, when a haring market is held in each of the leading towns.

On residential places and on farms where there are cottages, particularly on those to which cattle mounds are attached, engagements are by the year, from May to May. On other farms men are engaged for six months at weekly wages and board, but going home to sleep, this system being very common throughout the Union.

Casual labour is engaged as required, and is obtained chiefly from the herds of small landowners.

18. The hours of work in summer are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with an hour and a half or in some cases two hours for meals. In winter out-farmers and horsemen work as long hours as in summer, or at least are in attendance as early and late, while the ordinary labourer is employed from light to dark only.

Women, who are employed chiefly in the hay and flax season, work the same hours as the men.

The actual hours of work are from ten to ten and a half in summer, and vary with the length of the day in winter.

On Sunday one man is usually employed for a few hours feeding cattle and horses, and where there are a number of men employed it is customary for them to take this Sunday work in turn.

WAGES AND BARRINGS.

19. The current rate of wages in this Union is for men constantly employed 6s. a week and board, or from 9s. to 10s. a week without board or allowances.

* Appendix B. vol. 2.
* Appendix A.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

Depressed
1891/2.

No immi-
gration.

Efficiency of
the la-
bourers.

Employ-
ment both
regular and
casual.

Engage-
ments by
the year or
half-year.

Hours of
work and
meal-times.

Supply not
sufficient for
some dis-
tricts, scarce in
others.

Current rate
of wages.

THIS
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.
Two large
cottage.

In some cases the money payment is as low as 4s. a week, with free house, garden, and board, and some potatoes planted.

At Ballybay demesne, the residence of Mr. Leslie, D.L., there were 33 labourers employed at the date of my visit, of whom six were boys, and four residing in the garden.

The wage here is for ploughmen and cartmen 5s. a week, with free cottage, a rod of garden and bog ground, and for ordinary labourers 4s. a week, with similar perquisites.

On the Glenties demesne at Castleblaney, the property of Lord Clinton, a great deal of employment is given, although the owner is not a resident, and this fine place is kept in apple-pie order. I am indebted to Mr. De Bussery Fox, his lordship's agent, for the following particulars as to salaries and wages:—

Head gardener receives	84s.	and perquisites.
Land steward	70s.	do.
Forester	42s.	do.
Clerk of works	75s.	do.
Head keeper	55s.	house.
Two under-keepers	26s.	each and house.

Carpenter 24s. per week; painter, 20s.; and mason, 30s. The gardener has under him one man at 15s. a week, sent at 6s. each, and four boys at 6s. to 8s.

In the demesne at the ploughman has 72s. 6d. a week, six labourers have 12s. 6d. each, and one boy and two women 5s. and 6s.

The forester has one man at 11s. a week, three men at 10s. 6d., four boys at 8s., and two at 7s.

There, with a mason's labourer and a man in charge of stable-yard, make 34 labourers, besides seven who receive annual salaries, or 41 in all, constantly employed on this place.

Young men hired as Indian farm-servants earn from 12s. to 16s. a year, and in some cases 18s.

90. There are few opportunities of adding to wages by piece-work in this district. Mr. McKean gives harvesting at 15s. per Irish acre, equal to 9s. 3d. per English acre.

Mr. Henry gives 10s. per 1,000 for making bricks, and quarrying and breaking of road metal is done by the piece, at prices varying with the quality of the stone.

91. In haytime and harvest the casual labourer gets increased wages; mowers being paid about 5s. a day, and well fed, and a very good mower 6s. 6d. and his food.

Men who are in constant employment, "wet and dry," have no increase of wages, but partial board is sometimes given in lieu of regular man, or a present when all is gathered in.

92. Perquisites are not commonly given, or if they are, the money payment is reduced in proportion. A cottage is sometimes given ostensibly rent free, or a piece of bog ground, but it should generally be regarded as part of wages, and garden and potato ground in the same way, where no rent is charged.

93. At Ballinacree, in the southern part of the Union, I visited a labourer who has a cottage and about a rod of garden free, but his weekly wage was 4s. and food, whereas he would have been getting 6s. and food without the perquisites, so that the cottage and garden cost 2s. a week.

At Tullymore I saw a similar case, where the labourer had also 4s. a week and his food, with a good cottage and small garden, and some potatoes planted and manured by his employer.

94. The estimated annual earnings of a labourer in the Castleblaney Union are set down by Mr. McKean at 20s.; at 24s. to 26s. by Mr. Lewis; at 12s. to 13s. with board and lodging, or 22s. to 23s. by Mr. Cavell; at 21s. by Mr. Lockhart; 23s. to 26s. by Mr. Markey; at 24s. for ordinary labourers and 27s. 10s. for men in charge of horses and cattle, by Mr. Wall; and at 26s. for an ordinary labourer and 31s. for a skilled man by Mr. Hunter. Mr. Clapp's estimate is 24s. to 25s.; Mr. Conolly's 22s. to 26s.; and Mr. Lester's 24s. to 26s.

On the home farm at Castleblaney the ordinary labourers earn 27s. 6s. per annum and the ploughmen 32s. 10s., but their cases are exceptional. It may from these data be fairly concluded that the earnings of the ordinary labourer in this Union range between 22s. and 26s.; and those of skilled men, or ploughmen, who can do all the handy jobs, such as stacking, thatching, &c., from 26s. to 30s., with the solitary exception of the Castleblaney home farm, where the pay is more liberal.

COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

24. As regards number there is a sufficient supply of cottages for the very limited and decreasing number of labourers, but they are in general poor, and some of the dwellings of the small handicrafts are no better.

The labourers' cottages are found (1) in the towns and villages, (2) on the roadside (about the inn and corn mills, which comparatively few have dispersed over the farms. Some of the largest tenant farmers in the Union have no cottages on their holdings, and in some of the electoral divisions it is difficult to find one. At Agglebrook National School, with 122 children on the roll, 14 are the children of labourers, out of 22 on the roll of Corlett School, eight are the children of labourers; at Doonaghmore there are 10 on a roll of 200; while at Languncary School, with 49 on the roll, there is no labourer's child.

25. The best cottages in the Union are those on the Castleblaney home farm. The oldest type of these are built in pairs, with kitchen 14 x 15, bedrooms 14 x 15 and 9 x 10, and scullery 9 x 10, with a nose walled in yard, and about half a rod of garden. The new cottages have kitchen 16 x 14, sitting-room 10 x 9, two bedrooms 16 x 14 and 10 x 9, porch 9 x 4, and a fire to the back 14 x 7, forming scullery and pantry, with a walled yard 24 x 24, containing four-horse and sanitary arrangements. These fine cottages are let at 1s. 2d. a week, and the older type 1s.

There are 13 slated cottages on the home farm of Mr. Leslie, D.L., at Ballybay, containing three rooms in each, namely, kitchen 14 x 15, and two bedrooms 14 x 15 each, and with about a rod of garden attached.

26. Hugh Cawille has 12 tolerable cottages for the accommodation of his scabbers and farm labourers at Drumlick. They have only two apartments 12 x 10 each, but are in better repair than most others. Mr. Cawille has also a number attached to his mill and farm at Agglebrook, to which similar remarks apply.

At the village of Lough Mr. McKean has a large number of cottages, about 40 of which are unlet, which he built for the accommodation of the workers in a jute mill formerly owned by him. Some of these which I examined have four apartments, kitchen 12 x 12, and bedrooms 12 x 12, 9 x 8, and 9 x 8, but they are defective from the want of yards and sanitary accommodation.

At Ballinacree, in the southern part of the Union, there are a number of cottage holdings of small size held from the estate owner, having from half an acre to an acre of land. One of half an Irish acre and a cottage of three apartments pays 3s. a year; another with half an acre (rentable) and cottage of two small apartments and an outhouse pays 2s. 6s., while another of an Irish acre and similar cottage pays 2s. 10s.

At Colmragh I saw a wretched old cottage on a holding of 2 Irish acres, the rent being 11s. 6s., and at Lockrow a holding of 2 Irish acres at 24s. and another of 3 acres at 22s. 12s. have taken on them of a very poor description. Another holding of 4 Irish acres, or about six and a half English acres, at Tullymore, has a thatched cabin of one apartment and no outhouse, the tenant (an elderly woman) trying to make a living by subletting the little holding and keeping a few fowls in the cabin.

At Carnmahane Mill there are two very bad thatched cottages, one of which, containing two apartments 12 x 10 and 12 x 9, a scullery, named Carnmahane, his wife, and seven children live, the eldest of the family being 13 years of age.

At Sheshin two cottages, which I was told are occupied by labourers' families, measure 30 feet by 16 outside.

I could not see the inside as both cottages were locked up, but each of these cottages can contain only one apartment about 13 feet square.

28. In the towns of Castleblaney, Ballybay, Crossmaglen, and Newtownhamilton many of the cottages are defective as regards sanitary arrangements, and wanting in space and in the number of apartments necessary for the proper separation of the sexes.

In Castleblaney there are a number of rather poor two-roomed cottages on the site of the old brewery at the back of the main street. In one block the rents are 1s. 6s. a week for two small apartments without any yards, and in another block 1s. 6s. a week is paid, also for two-roomed cottages, equally defective in room accommodation, but somewhat larger.

B-47
Carnmahane
Cottages
situated in
number.

Description
of cottages.

Cottages
in the
Union.

B.-EE.
GARDEN-
LAWYER.

On the main street old four-roomed houses without any enclosed yard or out-houses pay 2s. and 2s. 6d. a week each, and are occupied by railway labourers and others a little better off than ordinary labourers.

At the opposite end of the town there are some neat cottages held directly under the estate owner, but they are occupied chiefly by the small dealers and tradesmen so numerous in market towns, and few by labourers.

In Ballybay town small cottages in Housing-house Lane, with two rather confined apartments and no rear, pay from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a week.

In Crossmaglen there are a good number of cottages of two apartments, with excellent roads, but having no gardens, out-houses, or sanitary arrangements, the rents being 1s. 3d. and 1s. 6d. weekly.

In Newtownhamilton labourers' cottages are also rather numerous. A slated cottage of two apartments 12 by 10 and 12 by 7, with about 30 perches of garden, pays 2s. 15s. rent. A row near the R. O. Chapel has a number of very small slated cottages, with six or seven perches of garden to each, at rents of 10d. a week. Like most of the others, these have an backdoor or sanitary arrangements.

There have been no cottages built by the guardians of this Union under the provisions of the Labourers' Acts, and from conversations I had with guardians and ratepayers, I do not think there is any likelihood of a move in this direction.

Letter from
Mr. Martin.

27 Mr. John Martin, the Hon. Sec. of the Carmichael Union Trade and Labour Union, having addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Commission on the subject of the housing of the labourers in that Union, I was instructed to place myself in communication with him on the occasion of my visit to Castleblayney, which adjoins the Union of Carmichael. I accordingly wrote to Mr. Martin enclosing with my letter a copy of the Notes and Inquiry, Form III, and inviting him to give evidence, and I received the following reply:—

"Dear Sir, "Carmichael Union, March 20th, 1883
"I feel extremely thankful for your very kind and instructive letter of the 15th instant, and in reply I have to inform you that we have got over 100 labourers on our Union belonging to the town and surrounding districts who have no houses fit for human habitation. They are miserable, dry, smoky cabins, letting in rain and wind, and made worse, having no sanitary law to protect them, no yards, no waterclosets, nothing to make them clean and healthy, and to keep away bad odours. Last summer a good many died here with a bad kind of sickness, which emanated from dirt and no heated room. The tradesmen, numbering over 30, are similarly situated, with regard to house room. The condition of the houses is most deplorable.

"There is no constant employment for labourers here, they work at intervals at 1s to 1s 6d a day. Tradesmen strive to live on what they make, always very poorly.

"There is a remarkable place here called James' Lane, in which there are 22 houses, top and bottom, in which over 300 people reside; no yards, no closets, not one clean inch of ground to call them ours.

"With regard to James' Lane, the doctors here condemned it.

"Yours obediently,

"JOHN MARTIN.

"Hon. Sec. Trade and Labour Union."

I thought it right to make some inquiry with the object of verifying the statements as to the Carmichael cottages. A gentleman of position living in that Union told me he could fully corroborate Mr. Martin's statement as to the very bad condition of James' Lane, but he knew nothing of the existence of an epidemic. The circumstances did not seem exceptional enough to induce me to depart from my general instructions and to pursue a minute inquiry beyond the district assigned to me.

GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

Gardens.

28. Gardens attached to labourers' cottages vary in size from a few perches up to half an acre, the ordinary size being between half a rood and a rood.

They are cultivated in the plainest manner, the crops grown being confined to potatoes and cabbage, and nothing of an ornamental character attempted, so far as I saw.

Allotments.

29. There are no allotments, as defined by the Act of 1874.

30. Potato grounds do not appear to be so generally given as in some other districts. Some say the labourers get as much potato ground as he can manage, others do not give any, while others again measure the ground and charge 2d. an Irish acre.

31. There are no cow-houses, and it is very unusual for a labourer who is not a landlord to have a cow here.

32. The live stock kept by the labourer in this district is confined to poultry, and sometimes a pig, and a good many goats are kept where permitted.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

33. There are no benefit societies that I heard of, except among the railway men, most of whom subscribe to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the weekly contribution being 1d. and the weekly allowance during sickness 12s.

TRADE UNIONS.

34. There is no trade union of agricultural labourers in Castleblayney district, but in the adjoining Union of Carmichael there is a Trade and Labour Union, as already stated. The existence of this union was I found unknown to a correspondent of mine in the Union and I heard of neither strikes or lock-outs in that district.

GENERAL RELATIONS.

35. The general relations existing between employers and labourers are described as being now good and friendly. This district was at one time noted for turbulence, and for crimes of an agrarian character, but of late years it has become quiet and orderly, and amicable relations exist among all classes.

One employer does not quite agree with the majority who have sent in returns. He says the "employer" "demands wages too high considering the amount of work done, and decent persons of produce. "Employed are discontented with wages, and "expecting to be made up by Home Rule."

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

36. There is but little pauperism in this Union. Out of a population of 23,574, there were, on the 29th September 1882, 110 persons receiving relief in the workhouse, and 184 upon outdoor relief, or in the two classes about 1·1 per cent of the entire population, and the ratio for that year varied from 10d. to 1s. 6d. in the 12 in the various electoral divisions of the Union.

Some difference of opinion exists among those who sent in returns as to the condition of the labourers in this Union. Doubtless they are better off in some districts than in others, but the want of employment in winter is a great loss to many of them. Several employers say that industrious men are well off; one says the condition of the labourer is "as good as that" of his employer, generally speaking; another that "they have better wages, better houses, are better clothed and educated than in the last generation;" while a member of the Board of Guardians says the condition of the labourer is "very poor," and adds "the small farmers in this neighbourhood may be considered labourers, and they have no employment or "practically none, during three-fourths of the year." Another says, "the agricultural labourer has almost disappeared, his place being taken by the small farmer or his son."

Another says, "the agricultural labourer about Ballybay is more comfortable than most of the small farmers. He eats better food and wears better clothes, with less toil and more profit to himself." I think the last statement requires some qualification, as it is clear that while his family are under working age the cottage labourer has a constant struggle to maintain them, while the man with a few acres and a cow has many of the necessities of life at a small cost. The remarks made as to the condition of the labourer in the Carmichael Union may be taken as applying here, the points unfavourable in both being the want of steady winter employment and the poor character of the cottages.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. McOwen,
(Assistant Commissioner).

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURERS
—
Potato
grounds.
Cow-rees.

Live stock.

No benefit
societies.No trade
union as to
Castle-
blayney; see R.
Carmichael.General
relations
friendly.

Pauperism.

Differing
opinions
stated.

APPENDIX A.

EXTRACTS FROM CENSUS RETURNS.

Occupation.	Number in 1881.	Number in 1891.	Increase.	Decrease.
Farmer, grazier, male	4,199	5,738	—	457
Do do female	1,039	1,096	46	—
Farmer's grazier's son, grandson, brother, nephew	1,215	1,445	199	—
Farm bailiff	9	5	8	—
Agricultural labourer (cottages)	545	555	9	—
Do do female	85	102	14	—
Farm servant, indoor, male	543	547	—	115
Do do female	194	78	—	117
Others connected with agriculture	15	8	—	6
General labourer, male	489	331	—	262
Do female	64	26	—	38
Shepherd, &c.	668	479	—	189

APPENDIX B.

POPULATION, AREA, AND VARIATION OF THE ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

County.	Electoral Division.	Population, 1891.	Area.	Poor Law Valuation.	Value per Acre.	Latitude & Longitude.
Armagh	County	665	2,514 3 14	1,659 5 0	11 9	1 8
"	Cloughing	270	9,983 3 25	2,671 5 0	14 0	1 2
"	Crossmaglen	3,285	4,764 5 9	4,884 19 0	17 0	1 6
"	Countydown	833	5,009 1 19	1,875 15 0	12 6	1 2
"	Down	1,618	5,461 0 14	2,314 19 0	10 8	1 0
"	Lisburn	924	3,966 0 4	3,790 8 0	14 3	1 0
"	Mayhew	1,689	5,094 2 25	1,748 4 0	11 6	1 4
"	Newtownhamilton	1,623	4,655 2 4	4,377 6 0	18 4	1 3
Monaghan	Annulla	1,433	4,712 2 15	2,993 17 0	11 10	1 4
"	Ballybay	2,311	4,754 1 3	7,696 15 0	22 0	1 4
"	Belmont	695	5,658 3 14	2,117 2 0	28 6	1 0
"	Bracefield	1,478	5,545 1 24	5,094 8 0	15 3	0 0
"	Carnahill	1,344	5,591 1 17	3,333 3 0	15 7	0 10
"	Carnahill	1,084	3,642 0 25	2,439 17 0	18 4	1 1
"	Castledown	2,190	5,594 5 5	9,257 5 0	29 0	1 2
"	Clontarf	1,073	5,905 3 23	4,385 4 0	16 9	1 5
"	Clontarf	1,625	5,197 3 20	4,338 1 0	18 5	1 8
"	Crossmaglen	2,009	5,475 1 6	5,849 6 0	15 6	1 0
"	Down	951	3,944 2 27	2,735 2 0	14 0	1 1
"	Lough	1,150	3,825 2 25	3,692 6 0	15 7	1 0
"	Mullyack	1,084	3,457 2 29	2,485 15 0	18 4	1 3

APPENDIX C.

ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURE HOLDINGS IN THREE ELECTORAL DIVISIONS OF CASTLEBAYLYNN UNION.

Electoral Division.	Holdings under 10 Valuation	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	Over 50.
Crossmaglen	210	145	53	11	5	—
Down	98	175	113	97	3	1
Mullyack	67	84	98	43	—	—
	355	402	261	51	8	1

APPENDIX D.

RECORDS FROM TWENTY RETURNERS IN CANTERBURY TOWNS.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	Mr. Wm. McCann, Chichester Valence, 1901, live in this Union.	Mr. E. Gibbons, J.P. 971, 106, in this Union.	Mr. J. Jones.	Mr. Hugh Curdick, Scotch Mill Over and Farm.	Mr. Sam. Lockhart, 211, 4.	Mr. E. Mayhew, P.L.G., 211, 4.
1. Source of Labour	Supply not sufficient. De- crease of one half.	Supply quite sufficient. De- crease.	Labour abundant. Not much change here.	Supply insufficient. Decreased harvest.	Supply sufficient. About the same.	Supply insufficient. Decreased harvest.
Efficiency	No. of men employed. Old men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	Very little decrease. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	Some improvement. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.
2. Employment	Employment constant. No decrease by the year.	Employment regular. No decrease by the year.	Employment both regular and irregular. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	Employment, part regular part casual. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	Regular employment. No decrease by the year.	Regular employment. No decrease by the year.
Hours	Hours 4.5 to 6 p.m. in winter, with half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner. In winter 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an hour for dinner.	Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in winter. From 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. Ten hours work in summer.	Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in winter. From 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. Ten hours work in summer.	Hours, ordinary labourers and women, in winter, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. In summer, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in summer. Ten hours work in summer.	Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in winter. From 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. Ten hours work in summer.	Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in winter. From 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. Ten hours work in summer.
Sunday work	One man alternately on 8-10 day.	One man alternately on 8-10 day.	One man alternately on 8-10 day.	One man alternately on 8-10 day.	One man alternately on 8-10 day.	One man alternately on 8-10 day.
3. Rate of Wages	Current wages 4s. a week and food.	Current wages 4s. a week and food.	Current wages 4s. a week and food.	Current wages 4s. a week and food.	Current wages 4s. a week and food.	Current wages 4s. a week and food.
Price-work	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.	No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed. No. of men employed.
Regulation, &c.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.	In winter men get 4s. a day and food.
Perquisites	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.	Perquisites, big ground and petate ground.
Annual earnings	Estimated savings 200 a year	Estimated savings 200 a year	Estimated savings 200 a year	Estimated savings 200 a year	Estimated savings 200 a year	Estimated savings 200 a year

EVIDENCE FROM TWELVE EMPLOYERS IN CANNED-FRUIT INDUSTRY—continued.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
—	Mr. Wm. McClos, Cloghoge Valence, 16d 10s in this Union.	Mr. B. Gilmore, J.P., 87d 10s in this Union.	Mr. J. J. J. J.	Mr. Hugh Curran, Beach Mell O'Connell and Farmer.	Mr. B. Mobery, R.L.G., 41d 6s.
1. GENERAL RELATIONS	With constant work the relation between men and women labourers are fair.	- - - - -	Very good - - - - -	Good - - - - -	Good.
2. GENERAL CONDITION OF THE INDUSTRY	Those who are labourers are well off.	Most of the labour in this district is done by men who are in the service of the State, and are paid for work for the larger farmers. The cottage labourers here are very few, and not re- quired from the season stand.	Fairly good - - - - -	Well off, if he be not busy -	Fair.

	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
—	Mr. Wm. Stewart R. G. Lough, R.L.G., D.L.	Mr. Andrew Hutton, Valence, 18d.	Mr. Joseph B. Chapp 87d 10s 6d.	Mr. Patrick O'Sullivan, R.L.G.	Mr. Thomas Barry, Blackburn.	Mr. John Baker, C.P.B., Ballybeg.
1. SUPPLY OF LABOUR	Supply abundant. Have but short experience here.	Supply sufficient, and as more. Decrease. No in- migration.	Supply is quite sufficient. Decrease 10 per cent. No immigration.	More than sufficient supply -	This supply is sufficient. There is a great decrease of hands.	This supply is barely sufficient. There is a slight decrease of hands.
Efficiency	Men are not so efficient as in the case of Lough- derry.	Efficiency is unsatisfactory. As good as other districts.	Considerable falling off in efficiency. Much the same at other districts.	This efficiency is not so good as formerly.	The efficiency is not so good as formerly.	Some complaint as to want of efficiency. I consider in our district it is very fine.
2. DEMANDS	Employment regular. En- ployment yearly.	Employment continues. En- ployment weekly.	Generally regular. Employ- ment by the half year. Hires from 7 to 7 in season, with two houses for months. From 7 to 2 in winter. Ten hours' work in summer.	Labour somewhat regular. Others not. Requirements of about two half years.	Both regular and casual. Requirements chiefly by the month with bursts.	For most part constant, with smaller activity in.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. McCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

ON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF DROMORE WEST
(CO. SLIGO).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEOFFREY DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

Grange House, Stranor,
June 1893.

SIR,
1. I have the honour to submit the following report upon the Union of Donegal West, which I visited from the 10th to the 26th of April last.

2. The Union of Donegal West, lies along the seaboard of the county Sligo for a distance of about 20 miles, stretching from Ballyvaughan Bay on the east to Killybeg Bay on the west, and having for its southern boundary the watershed of the Ox Mountains, which rise to the height of 1,778 feet.

3. The area of the Union, according to the Ordnance Survey, is 97,962 acres, or rather more than 150 square miles, and the Poor Law valuation is 36,932.

The population of the Union, which was 17,349 in 1881, had fallen in 1891 to 15,019, a decrease of 2,330, or 13·4 per cent.

4. All round the coast there is a broad fringe of non-barrenish strata, the lower limestone being the member of the series most largely developed, except in the detached divisions of Donegal and Fompley, where it is replaced by carboniferous sandstone or shale. At the eastern end of the Union there is a development of mica-schist, rising into mountains land to the south of the limestone, and in the middle and towards the western part of the Union there is an immense tract of unshifting bog, rising into high mountain bog towards the south.

5. The soil on the limestone and carboniferous sandstone is a fine dry clay of moderate depth and of good sound quality, both for tillage and pasture, and at several places along the coast there is sheep land of great excellence.

The unshifting part in the middle of the Union, where it has been reclaimed, is a poor, light, mossy soil, with gravelly subsoil, but there is a great area of deep unclaimed peat, affording an unlimited supply of fuel, not only to the residents, but to those in the interior and of the Union and on the coast, who have no local supply.

The 17 detached divisions in the Union, four of which are scheduled as "congested districts," i.e., having a Poor Law valuation of less than 11 lbs. per acre of population.

Three of these divisions, Bannewry, Castleconnor East, and Rathmacrerry, are almost entirely bog and with a little mountain, and the fourth, Mullaghmore, is nearly all high mountain bog, with some small reclamations along the river, and the whole division, containing 13,282 acres, has a valuation of only 317l., or rather less than 6d. an acre.

There are two other poor divisions, Stranor and Fompley South, which have a good deal of mountain, and consequently a low valuation, but having a comparatively small population they are not scheduled.

The division of Donegal West, has a good deal of mountain, but also some good limestone land, hence its valuation is intermediate between the mountain and the coast divisions. The remaining 10 divisions, all of which run to the coast, are valued at from 11s. to 36s. 6d. an acre, and all contain land of good quality, but some of them include a portion of bog, which lowers their valuation.

6. There are two small towns or large villages in the Union, Ballyvaughan, with a population of 330, and Inishmore, population, 311. The former is chiefly a business town, having a weekly market and a bank agency, while both towns are a fishing place, and would probably develop into a large fishing centre if it had a better harbour. There are no other villages having a population over 100, but there are some thickly populated townlands along the coast.

7. The holdings in the Union are generally small, but there are scattered over it some large farms, which, with a few exceptions, have been put into permanent pasture. In an appendix* I have given an analysis of the number of holdings under 5l., 10l., 20l., and 50l., and over 50l., which Mr. Donohue, the Clerk of the Union, prepared for me, and I may here express my indebtedness to this very

conscious official for this and other information which he willingly afforded me. From the figures in the appendix it will be apparent that there are in the Union a great many landholders on the border line between labourers and farmers, and who, not having sufficient employment for their families on their own holdings, send them out as day labourers or as indoor servants on the larger holdings.

The smaller landholders cultivate almost exclusively with the spade, the exceptions being on the coast, where many of them keep horses for carting the kelp weed from the shore to the fields, and are thus enabled to use them on holdings too small otherwise to maintain them.

On the bog soils spade labour is general, potatoes and cabbage being planted on ridges, deeply trenched and well cultivated. On small holdings, where one home is kept, two neighbours join together in ploughing, and sometimes a man who does not keep a horse exchanges his own labour for horse work.

Donkeys are kept on the poorer bog holdings, and manure, turf, &c. are carried in baskets on the donkey's back.

On the few large holdings where tillage is still practised, such as Mr. Petrie's, Mrs. Christie's, and a few others, the mode of cultivation is good, and the most improved implements are used.

8. Employment, other than agricultural, consists of kelp bearing, fishing, turf cutting and drying, and quarrying.

(a) Along the low part of the coast, from Ballyvaughan to Loughbeg point, at the entrance to Killybeg Bay, an immense quantity of seaweed is blown ashore, and is divided among the tenants of each townland or property according to their rent. A portion is used as manure, but a great deal is dried and burned into kelp, many families making it a season from 5 to 10 tons, and some more. Mr. McDonnell, one of the buyers, told me that at the little roadside of Pollaheny, where there is no harbour, and where the kelp is taken out to the wharves in small boats, about 700 tons had been shipped last season, and I have since heard from Mr. McKenna, the pilot of the Moly, that about 400 tons of last season's kelp are still stored at Pollaheny, owing to the difficulty of getting vessels to come to that exposed coast.

Mr. McKenna also mentioned in his letter that one vessel I saw loading there was obliged to go away with one third of her cargo, owing to bad weather, and take the remainder of her cargo at a sheltered harbour in County Galway.

I do not suppose the quantity (1,100 tons) represents the entire union's production of kelp, but, even if it did, it would be a great addition to the earnings of the people on five or six miles of coast, as, at the rather low price of last year, 4d. 6½ per ton, it would be worth nearly 5,000l.

(b) Although the number of "fishermen" returned by the census of 1891 is only 27 for the Union, there are a great many fishing boats, perhaps 70 or 80, but they are manned by the small landholders or their sons being along the coast, who confine their operations to fishing for salmon in summer and for herrings in autumn. It is difficult to obtain information as to the earnings of these boats, the men generally evading questions, and agreeing, when they give any reply, to depreciate the value of the fishing. One man said the salmon fishing had paid well some years ago, but that too many are now engaged in it, and that last year it did little more than pay expenses. Men are not employed by wages, but by share, and the owner of the boat and net has a share.

At Antrim, where there is a pier and boat-slip, there are 17 boats, a few at the pier of Pollaheny, 14 at Pollaheny, and about 50 at Inishmore and the neighbourhood.

The professional fishermen, who live at Inishmore, fish at all times of the year when the weather permits, but it is a very exposed coast, and defective in harbours. Some of the Inishmore fishermen have very appearance of prosperity, while others have poor cabins, and are evidently not well off.

(c) Turf cutting and saving affords a good deal of employment to those who live on the extensive bog tracts in the middle of the Union. Many come for turf from distant parts of the Union, where there is no local supply, some-

* Appendix B.

R.-L.
Incomes
Wm.

in a turf bank, and contracting with a man to cut and dry the turf, or buying it ready-made from the roadside in the bog. The measurement of turf is a "hundred" which means 120 barrels, each barrel containing 16 cubic feet, and for saving this Sir M. Crofton says he pays 2L 10s., but that he believes farmers often get it done for 2L.

A farmer, Mr. Carnegie, however, says he gets a double hundred, 240 barrels, made for 2L, but it is possible that this is a very dry bog, where it is easily done, as Mr. O'Kelly, another farmer, gives 4L for 240 barrels.

The
cottages.

(d) There are very good flag-quarries in the neighbourhood, but owing to the want of mill accommodation, this industry is but slightly developed.

L.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

Ample
supply
of
labour.

9 The supply of labour, in the Union of Droichead West, is ample, although the cottages are very few. The census returns of 1881 and 1891 show some rather remarkable figures. During the decade farmers (males) had decreased by 259, while females had increased by 71, showing a net decrease in the number of landowners of 188.

The male relatives over 20, living with farmers had increased by 93; agricultural cottagers, male and female, and general labourers, taken together, had fallen from 452 to 343, a decrease of 110, while indoor farm servants, male and female, had increased in a similar ratio, namely, from 186 to 294, or an increase of 108. Adding together all the classes of agricultural cottagers, shepherds, farm boys, indoor farm servants and general labourers, male and female, the numbers read in 1881, 452 persons, and in 1891, 665, so that while there was a considerable excess of the already small class of cottagers, their place had been quite filled up by the increased number of indoor farm servants, who, in a country like Droichead are generally drawn from the small landholding class.

The supply of labour generally is derived from the families of the small farmers.

Sir M. Crofton, Bart., says:—"In this neighbourhood there is hardly anything that can be called a regular labouring class. In my own case, only those men out of twelve whom I have working for me, are independent of the land. The rest are either tenant farmers or the sons of tenant farmers, living at home with their family. The fact is, the farms are so small, that, for men wanting labourers, the farmers themselves are in many cases able to spare time to earn money by labour, while there is so little employment and wages are so low that there is a constant emigration of the young and active to America. There is, therefore, a sufficient supply of labour in this district."

Mrs. Nidderly, who employs 13 men and a boy on a large holding of bad land, says that "the labour is all derived from the families of small farmers on my own property and on Colonel Cooper's."

Mr. Christie, who has a dairy-farm with 50 cows, and their produce up to two years old, and who tills largely, obtains all her labour from the small farming class.

Decrease in
the number
cottages.

10 There has been a constant decrease in the number of agricultural labourers (cottagers) in this Union, and in 1891 they only numbered 326, and the general labourers 137, or, making the two classes together, about 2·8 per cent. of the population, but, as already explained, the greater part of the labour is derived from the small landowners and their families.

No immi-
gration.

11 There is no immigration at any season of the year; on the contrary some emigrate from here to Scotland, but not in the same numbers as from the adjoining county of Mayo.

Efficiency

12 There is much variety of opinion as to the efficiency of the labourers here; one return says they are "most efficient"; others say "not so good as formerly"; "improved, better than in other parts; better than formerly"; "willing"; while one large employer says:—"The men here cannot be called good workers, but that they are partly owing to the fact that their staple food is Indian meal and potatoes." From my own observation, I think the men here are not equal in physique to the labourers of the northern counties.

II.—CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT.

Large
Scottish
employ-
ment

13 On the walled places of the gentry and on some large farms, employment is regular and continuous, and male and indoor servants are of course employed constantly, but there are none in the mixed part of the

Union who have not sufficient employment. When I went to the Union, I arranged as usual to meet the Board of Guardians, and for that purpose attended at the board-room. There was no meeting held on that occasion, but a day-school came to me under the impression that the Labour Commission was an organization for providing work for the relief of the unemployed, and they handed me a memorial asking for employment on which work, such as roads and drainage. After explaining that other works were actually outside the scope of the Labour Commission, and referring the case to the Congested Districts Board, I heard statements from several of them as to the want of employment, which is very strongly set forth in the following extract from the memorial:—"The people are inclined to work if they get employment, and they are on the verge of starvation and famine if not advised within a very short period of time. The little supply of potatoes the people had is now exhausted, and they have nothing to subsist on any longer unless they rot or starve."

I afterwards conferred with the local clergy as to the condition of these people, and visited their neighbourhood, and while I have no doubt that employment is scarce in winter, and that additional funds to open up the bog country would be a highly useful improvement, I quite failed to obtain evidence of anything like the acute distress of which these people complained.

14 The usual hours of work are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., or from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with two hours for meals, and in winter from daylight till dark, with an hour or an hour and a half for dinner. The actual hours of labour are 10 in summer, and from 7 to 8 in winter.

15 Few are employed on Sunday. Cattlemen and horsemen started for about three hours.

The
agricultural
labourers.

Separation
of the small
landholders.

Hours of
work.

Sunday
work.

III.—WAGES AND EARNINGS.

16 The current rate of weekly wages for men constantly employed ranges from 5s. to 8s., and for ploughmen 3s. Mrs. Nidderly, who employs 13 men, all living off the place, pays 7s. a week in summer, and 6s. 6d. in winter.

Mr. Warren pays 7s. a week to ordinary men and 8s. to a ploughman. Girls finishing farms get 6s. a week, and during harvest from 1s. to 1s. 5d. a day.

Mr. McCormick says 6s. a week is the regular wage with men, except for extra men in haytime, who have 7s. and mowers, who get 15s. Mr. Carnegie gives 7s. 6d. round the year, 1s. 6d. a day to extra men when employed, and 2s. 6d. a day for mowing. Mr. Loughdon gives 8s. a week. Mr. Devery says 1s. and support is the regular wage for casual men, 2s. and dinner for turf cutting, and 3s. and full board for mowing meadows.

Sir Malley Crofton gives 7s. a week to ordinary labourers, and 8s. to a ploughman. In some few cases regular men have a shifting a day and their board, but this is rather above the ordinary rate.

17 Peatwork is not commonly given in this district. Turf cutting, which has been already alluded to in paragraph 8, is often done by peatwork, and the mowing of meadows, where the nature of the ground prevents the use of a machine, and on small farms where a machine is not kept, is also done by peatwork, at 6s. to 10s. per Irish acre (equal to 2s. 3d. to 6s. per statute acre), according to quality.

Peatwork.

18 In haytime and harvest there is an increased demand for men, and they are somewhat better paid, ordinary labourers receiving from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a day and board, and mowers 2s. a day and board, or 2s. 6d. without board.

19 As a rule, no perquisites or allowances are given to the labourer in this district.

On a few places, however, the resident man have free cottages and gardens, and herds graze freely the grazing of a cow and calf, and sometimes a few sheep, but the money payment is reduced in proportion to the allowances, so that this does not seem to appear to have any advantage over the ordinary labourer.

In a few cases also a turf bank is given, and turf is sometimes carried by an employee.

20 Mr. Pettit estimates the annual earnings at 20s., including for holidays. Mrs. Nidderly 17l. 10s., Mr. Warren, 18l. to 23l. Mr. McCormick 16l., Mr. Carnegie 19l. 10s., and Sir Malley Crofton 18l. to 22l.

Young men employed as indoor servants have from 10s. to 12l. a year, with board and lodging, and in some cases an experienced man may have a little more.

Estimated
annual
earnings.

IV.—COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

21 Few of the employers who send me returns make any reference to the state of the cottages, probably because little or nothing could be said in their favour.

Poor class
of cottages
in the
Union.

* Appendix A, Column 1.
; " " R.

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

Mr. Denny, P.L.G., is, however, an exception. He says the supply of cottages is insufficient, and that they are "of the worst description." Sir M. Croft, Bart., says—"The cottage accommodation is bad on the whole;" and again, "The small farmers and cottiers are badly housed, but there has been a distinct improvement in this respect. Some labourers' cottages have been built by the Board of Guardians under the Labourers' Act, but not in this immediate neighbourhood. The ordinary cottage in this neighbourhood consists of one, two, or three rooms. There is no drainage at all as a rule, but in most cases a fair supply of good water."

These statements were fully borne out upon inspection, as I found, scarcely any good cottages except a few pen-houses, and many are quite overcrowded, and scarcely fit for human habitation.

Tony Day pays a day's labour at the week as rent of a poor cabin of one apartment, 15x14, occupied by himself and wife, a grown-up son, and a grandchild.

Edward Magor, Carrowooden, pays 2*l.* a year for one apartment, 14x13, occupied by himself and wife, two girls, 30 and 17, and a boy of 14.

Martin Duffy, Goomesuffagh, has a cottage of one apartment, 15x14, and about 10 perches of garden at 2*l.* 12*s.* The occupants are himself, wife, and a girl of 14. Tom Gallagher, ploughman, with his wife and young family, have a very bad one roomed cottage, 18x18, at Pieshausfarrell, which he holds rent free, while employed. On the same place Peter McGee has one apartment, 15x13, with a few perches of garden, at 1*l.* a year while employed; this cabin has no window.

In the village of Inishmore, there are some very small overcrowded cabins. Michael Reilly, a fisherman, has only one apartment, 15x12, into which are crammed himself and his wife, six boys and three girls, or eleven persons in all.

James Reynolds, senior, and James Reynolds, junior, with their families, also in all, have a cabin with two poor small apartments, and many others are equally crowded. There are very few fairly good cottages in the Union, besides seven which have been built by the guardians. The latter contain three apartments, about 18x12, 13x10, and 13x9 each, besides a small shed, piggery, henhouse, and &c., for which, with half an acre of garden, the rent of 2*l.* 14*s.* a year is charged.

Mr. Petrie has built an excellent cottage, by order of the Local Commission, but it is not occupied by a labourer, being let to a penman, with half an acre of garden, at 7*l.* rent.

Mr. Looghead has two fairly good cottages at Droonoe containing two apartments, 14x14 and 14x8, with small gardens attached, and let at 1*l.* a week each.

Mr. Warren has three tolerable cottages, which his men hold free of rent, while employed. There is great need for cottage improvement in this Union, the small number built by the Guardians being quite inadequate to satisfy the requirements.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

22. Where gardens are attached to cottages, they generally do not exceed 20 perches, but a few may reach a rood, while many have only a few peaches, and some have none. They are cultivated fairly, the crops planted being potatoes, cabbages, and cabbins.

23. There are no allotments, as defined by the Act of 1891.

24. A small quantity of peat ground is sometimes given free to a resident labourer, but it is more commonly let at 1*l.* per rood Irish.

25. Cow pasture is generally given to herds or cartkeepers on out-farms as part payment. When other labourers take grazing for a cow, they pay, on good land, 3*l.* for the summer half year, and 1*l.* for the winter.

26. Few cows are kept except by herds. Goats are frequently seen, and pigs and poultry are universal, but bees are rare.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

27. Benefit societies are quite unknown in this district.

VII.—TRADE UNIONS.

28. Trade unions are also unknown among the labourers here.

VIII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

29. The relations existing between the employers and the labourers in this Union are said to be of the most friendly character, although the employers appear to have done less than in many other places for the comfort of their men. The people of the northern part of the County Sligo have the reputation of being quiet and orderly, and crime is very rare. The labourers complain of the want of employment in winter, and some of them grumble about their poor house accommodation, but, on the whole, they appear wonderfully contented, considering their surroundings.

IX.—GENERAL CONDITIONS.

30. The general condition of the labourer is not so satisfactory here as in the northern and eastern Counties which I have visited. There are so many small landholders to compete with the cottagers for the scanty employment that it is to be feared, that the result is a low rate of wages, a want of employment in winter, and a steady falling in the number of labourers.

On this part of the subject I may quote freely from a long letter received from Sir M. Croft, Bart.—"I have already stated that there is hardly a labouring class at all as distinct from the small farmers, and I have always considered the 10 and 15 acre farmers of this neighbourhood may be taken as about on a level with the ordinary agricultural labourer elsewhere. If the subject is looked at in this light, I think it will appear that, on the whole, the small Irish tenant is better off than the English agricultural labourer. He pays only a small rent for his farm, on which he grows enough potatoes and cabins for his family. He keeps a cow and has milk for his children, and sells butter as well. He keeps pigs and poultry, and always makes a good deal by them."

"Of course, a man who has less than 10 Irish acres is badly off, and so for the cottier, who has no land, and is wholly dependent on an odd job now and then from a farmer, he is undoubtedly in a very bad way, and it is hard to say how he manages to live at all."

"To sum up, there are very few agricultural labourers, pure and simple, in this neighbourhood, and the few there are, are undoubtedly very badly off."

Mr. Madden says, "the people are not sufficiently employed."

Mr. Warren compares the condition of the people now with what it was 40 years ago, when he came to the district—"Since 1850, the condition of the agricultural labourer in this immediate locality, has changed very much for the better; they are better paid, fed, and clothed. The rate of wages at that date on the opposite side of the river in the County Mayo, was, for able-bodied labourers only 3*s.* per week without food; on this side in the County Sligo, it was 4*s.* for ordinary labourers, and 5*s.* for ploughmen and carters, with the provisos in some instances of cottage free, or potato plot. Girls 2*s.* to 3*s.* per week. Harvest wages for men, 1*l.* a day, and mowmen, 1*l.* 6*s.* Now the average wages are from 7*s.* to 5*s.* per week, with or without potatoes, girls, 4*s.* a week, and in harvest, haying, or mowing, 1*l.* 8*s.* to 1*l.* 6*s.* a day, and men from 3*s.* to 1*l.* a week."

From this statement it appears, that since the "bad times," as the period succeeding the potato famine was called in Ireland, the condition of the people in this Union and the adjoining districts has materially improved, but still the labourer is not so well off here as in the northern and eastern counties.

There are no competing industries here, and although the agricultural labourers are few, there is a large population of small landholders willing to take employment when they can get it, and this, coupled with the fact that large holdings have been laid down in pasture, tends to keep down the rate of wages, and to induce labourers to emigrate.

31. Before concluding, I may refer to the very small amount of pauperism in this Union. For the year ending 25th March, the expenditure for relief in the workhouses amounted to only 188*l.*, and the outdoor relief to 253*l.* 12*s.*, the total expenditure for maintenance, outdoor and indoor, being 441*l.* 12*s.*, or about 3*d.* in the *l.* on the valuation. The average number of inmates being about 25, it seems a pity to keep up a staff of officers, and some of the guardians think the Union should be joined to Sligo and Ballyva, and the workhouse buildings turned into a factory.

E-X.
Distances
Went
Amiable
relations
between the
employers
and the
labourers.True con-
dition of the
labourers.Letter from
Sir M. Croft
Bart.Letter from
Mr. Warren.Small
amount of
pauperism
in the
Union.

S—K.
Droicore
Went
Ferry and
Larabon.

32. I wish, also, to refer briefly to conversations with the Catholic clergy and other residents, who are desirous of having the piers in this district improved.

The coast is very much exposed, there being no well-sheltered inlet or anchorage for a distance of 30 miles, and though piers have been constructed at Anglin Head, Polladerry, and Inishcroona, the two latter have no boat slips, and might be much improved. Inishcroona is a fishing place of some importance, and the Rev. Mr. O'Connell, P.P., is endeavouring to promote a light railway from Ballina to this place.

Whether this scheme succeeds or not, I think there could scarcely be a more useful expenditure of public money than in improving the south side of the Inishcroona pier, so as to permit the shipment of kelp from a safe harbour, instead of, as at present, from the exposed anchorage of Polladerry; and to afford shelter to the larger class of fishing vessels.

Rev. Mr. O'Kane, P.P. of Esky, and Rev. Mr. Kelly, P.P. of Droicore, also urged the importance of improving the existing piers, particularly Polladerry, which appears to me to be comparatively useless for want of a boat-slip.

I have referred to this subject out of deference to the opinion of the clergymen of the district, and because not only the professional fishermen, but many of the small landholders on the coast, who are little removed from the position of labourers, would certainly be benefited by the improvement of the piers.

Other suggestions were made as to arterial drainage and roads, but as these, I think, come more within the scope of the Congested Districts Board, I shall not enter upon them.

33. I omitted to mention earlier that there is no railway communication through the Droicore Union, the route being run by a steamer which runs twice daily between Sligo and Ballina. A good local trade, however, is done at Esky and Inishcroona, for which Ballina is the station, and at Droicore West, through Ballynabone.

34. In conclusion, I wish to record my thanks to the many gentlemen, both clerical and lay, who afforded me information during my stay in the Union.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. McCune,
(Assistant Commissioner).

THE
ASSISTANT
COMMISSIONER
LABOUR.

Went at
railway to
Droicore
Ballina.

Admission
of
passengers
recorded.

APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS OF RATINGS IN FOUR ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Electoral Division.	Number of Holdings under 50 Acre.	50-100	100-200	200-500	Above 500
Barnstaple*	136	65	12	3	5
Cardiganshire, West	87	79	15	49	17
Cardiganshire, East	59	38	21	22	5
Radnorshire	105	67	55	3	1
	387	249	113	80	28

* Assembled by the Congested Districts Board.

APPENDIX C.

POPULATION, AREA, and VALUATION of the ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Electoral Division.	Population, 1881.	Population, 1891.	Area.	Valuation.	Value, 1891, per Acre.
Anglo-Saxon	712	568	3,885 2 8	1,095 7 6	28 2
Radnorshire*	1,105	108	6,108 5 36	1,284 11 8	20 36
Cardiganshire, East*	813	708	7,481 1 8	1,177 9 8	15 3
Cardiganshire, West	1,704	1,584	6,025 3 34	4,082 14 8	14 18
Stratford, East	80	68	3,732 2 25	1,867 5 6	18 0
Stratford, West	108	121	3,711 3 35	1,501 5 0	7 2
Drumore	1,019	880	3,006 2 32	1,795 8 0	15 0
Becky, East	1,135	104	4,551 1 35	3,058 2 0	15 4
Becky, West	5,028	5,578	6,218 1 18	4,468 0 0	18 13
Highgate	1,481	1,132	5,294 5 15	4,084 2 0	14 5

APPENDIX C—continued.

Electoral Division.	Population, 1881.	Population, 1891.	Area.	Valuation.	Value, 1891, per Acre.
Radnorshire*	230	198	1,261 7 24	1,171 12 0	4 6
Radnorshire*	1,705	1,400	7,561 3 8	1,171 12 0	4 6
Stratford	625	680	7,007 1 58	1,088 13 0	4 0
Stratford, North	612	551	3,126 1 35	1,088 13 0	15 0
Stratford, South	546	635	3,177 1 1	1,079 30 8	7 14
Stratford, East	590	558	3,715 2 53	1,168 0 8	15 5
Stratford, West	925	778	3,177 1 38	1,088 13 0	14 18
	77,595	15,839	17,481 2 32	32,882 18 8	—

* Divisions assembled by the Congested Districts Board.

APPENDIX D.

EXTRACTS FROM CENSUS RETURNS as to OCCUPATIONS of the PEOPLE.

Occupation.	1881.	1891.	Increase.	Decrease.
Farmers, general, male	3,197	1,568	—	1,629
Do., do., female	148	88	51	—
Farmers' grangekeepers, general, male, female, over 16	501	361	140	—
Do., do., female	18	21	3	—
Shepherd	55	51	—	4
Farm bailiff	—	7	7	—
Farm-servant (general), male	146	164	18	—
Do., do., female	20	20	—	—
General labourer, male	57	325	268	—
Do., female	18	2	—	16
Fisherman	51	57	—	6
	5,078	5,078	214	421
	—	—	—	524
Net decrease in these classes	—	—	—	107

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

I R E L A N D.

R E P O R T

BY

MR. R. MCCREA
(ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER),

ON THE

POOR LAW UNION OF BALLYMAHON
(COUNTIES OF LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH).

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THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

To GEORGE DRAGE, Esq., Secretary,
Royal Commission on Labour.

George House, Strabane,
June 1893.

Sir,
1. I have the honour to submit the following report upon the condition of the agricultural labourer in the Union of Ballymahon, Ireland, which I visited during the period extending from the 22nd of May to the 4th of the present month.

2. At the outset I wish to tender my thanks to Mr. McGroarty, the clerk of the Union, to the members of the Board of Guardians, and to the gentry and farmers of the district with whom I came in contact, who all showed a disposition to further the inquiry and willingly gave me information.

3. The Union of Ballymahon is as nearly as possible in the centre of Ireland, being situated in the southern part of the county Longford, and the western part of the county Westmeath, and forming part of the great midland plain which covers approximately half of the island.

The Union is bounded on the north by the Longford Union, on the east by Mullingar, on the south by Athlone, and is separated from the Union of Roscommon by Lough Ree, a wide expansion of the River Shannon.

4. The entire rock formation of the district and of the surrounding country is carboniferous limestone, the "lower limestone," and the "crag" being both developed in the Ballymahon Union.

On the higher rolling lands the limestone is covered by clay and drift gravel, and on the lower levels by bogs, of which the largest tracts are on the western side of the Union. The whole surface of the country is undulating, with some hills, but there is no approach to mountains at any part, the general elevation being from 200 to 400 feet above sea level.

A very fine river, the Inny, which takes its rise in the county Meath, flows westward through the Union, and with its tributary stream drains the greater part of the district into Lough Ree. There were formerly several large flour mills on this river, but they are now standing idle and going into dilapidation, except one or two, which do some grinding for farmers in the winter season.

5. The area of the Ballymahon Union, according to the Ordnance Survey, is 140,144 acres, and the poor law valuation 61,682. The Longford part of the Union, containing 69,753 acres, is valued at 45,783 lrs. 6d., or about 11s. 6d. an acre, including bog and other waste, as well as buildings; while the Westmeath part, 70,391 acres, is valued at 50,892. 6s. 3d., or about 14s. an acre.

6. The population of the Union, which in 1881 stood at 17,166, had fallen in 1891 to 14,560, showing the large decrease during the decade 14.7 per cent.

7. The soil of the district is chiefly clay or clay loam of a more or less friable nature, with here and there a gravelly vein where the "drift" prevails, and some reclaimed bog in the lower valleys.

There was a considerable proportion of good wheat and barley land when the country was in tillage, but nearly all the best soils have now been devoted to permanent pasture and meadow, and only the inferior soils and small holdings are much tilled. There is a great deal of superior sown pasture, and some good feeding-land and meadow, through the eastern and southern part of the Union, while in the western part the soil is generally lighter, and tillage is more practised. Generally speaking, the lighter uplands and the boggy lands are in the hands of the smaller tenants, and the finer lands occupied by graziers, or by the resident owners.

The general character of the whole district is distinctly pastoral. According to the agricultural returns for 1891, in the counties of Longford and Westmeath, taken together, 72.60 per cent. of the arable land was

pasture, 15.55 per cent. under meadow and clover, and 11.85 per cent. in tillage.

8. There is no railway through the Union, the town of Ballymahon being about 12 miles distant from Athlone on the south, and from Edgeworthstown Station on the North. The Royal Canal runs through the Union and affords facilities for the carriage of heavy goods to and from Dublin.

9. The town of Ballymahon, being at a distance from the larger towns, is a flourishing business place, with a weekly market, and a branch of the National Bank. It had a population in 1881 of 849, and in 1891 of 783. The principal villages in the Union are Ballymore, population in 1891, 207; Abbeykeeran, 174; Keshoge, 163; and the smaller decaying villages of Moyra, Fethall, Tainny, and Berray.

10. There are some fine well-wooded residential places in the Union, and there is also a good deal of beech-wood timber on many of the large farms, which gives a rich and sheltered appearance to the country, and improves the climate.

11. The largest owners of land in the Union are Colonel King-Harman with 30,160 and Lord Anson with 12,000 acres, and other considerable owners are Mr. John Malone, Sir B. Chagnon, Mr. Bransley Marley, Mr. Sandham, Mr. Deane-Langworth, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Bond, and Mr. Ledwith.

12. The fine residence and demesne of Newmatt, the property of Colonel King-Harman, lies about a mile from the town of Ballymahon, and although nearly all in grass, this place, owing to its large size and the manner in which it is kept, affords a great deal of employment.

There are seven labourers under the gardener, who have life a week with cottage and garden of half an acre or more, for which they pay the nominal rent of 3s. On the farm there are 19 labourers constantly employed, who have 2s. a week, and all who live on the place have a cottage and garden of half an acre or more, with turf and potato ground, paying 3s. a year rent. Four of the men keep cows, paying 2l. 10s. 6d. for grazing during the summer half-year, or 3l. for the whole year. There are 17 cottages on the place, and six labourers, who live outside it, are tenants of small farms.

A foreman labourer, who takes the steward's orders, has 12s. a week with the same privileges as the other men, and the head has 2s. a week, house, garden, and turf, with 10s. a year allowance given in lieu of grazing. In haytime the number of farm men is increased to about 25.

Other large employers are Mr. Malone, Mr. Kingstone, Mr. Wakefield, and Mr. Gray.

Mr. Kingstone keeps 14 men constantly, at an average of about 8s. a week with free cottage and garden from a road to half an acre, and some of them have a cow's grass added, for which others are charged 2l. There are eight cottages on this place, the remainder of the men living outside.

Mr. Wakefield employs 11 men, the foreman and head having houses on the farm, and the other labourers being tenants of small bog holdings of from 1 to 4 acres on the property. The wages here are 7s. for the winter half-year and 9s. for the summer, and the foreman told me he could at any time get as many men as he wished, as numbers were always looking for employment.

The foreman has 25l. a year, potato-ground, turf, and grass for a cow and calf, and the head has 2s. a week, cottage and garden, and grass of cow and calf.

13. Industries other than farming are of the most meagre description in this district.

There is a small manufacture of peat litter carried on at Lyvena, near the bank of the canal in the northern end of the Union, and the product is sent to Dublin by

R.-XL
BALLY-
MAHON.

Railway and canal communication.

Form of farmhouse and cottages in the Union.

Wooded appearance of the country.

Largest owners of land.

Largest employers.

Form of cottage and garden.

Form of cottage and garden.

Population in 1881 and 1891.

Form of cottage and garden.

Employment other than farming.

E-KL.
BALDWIN.

the canal. Men are paid 18s. a week, and the manager says he cannot get as many as he wants while the turf cutting is in progress in the neighbourhood.

Messrs. Kilpatrick, timber merchants, employ 10 or 12 men at a small mill near Ballymahon, and 25 at another place in the Longford Union, to whom they pay 12s. a week, and 16s. to the foreman sawyer.

There is a small wooden mill at Ballymahon near the town, but it appears to be limited to a rather coarse country trade, and does not make much progress.

At Athlone, however, there is a large and prosperous woollen factory, which is said to compare favourably with any other establishment in making Irish tweed and frieze.

There were formerly extensive flour mills in the Liffey, for which the fine water power of the River Liffey and the vicinity of the canal afforded exceptional advantages, but this trade has been entirely revolutionized of late years, the flour being imported, and the mills standing idle; one or two small mills only being worked in winter, grinding for farmers.

Turf cutting gives a large amount of employment, there being bog in nearly every locality in the Union, and the demand for men is therefore very brisk during the early part of the summer. Turf cutting is indeed the best employment of the casual labourer, and it lasts from April till the commencement of the hay time.

I.—THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

Supply
sufficient.

16. The supply of labour in the Ballymahon Union is generally stated to be sufficient for the requirements, except for a short time during haymaking. In addition to the agricultural labourers concentrated as cottagers and general labourers, there are throughout the Union numerous small landholders, who are in reality labourers, their little patches being quite insufficient to provide work and support for their families, and these men and their sons largely swell the ranks of the labourers. Out of fourteen returns from employers, eight say that the supply of labour is sufficient in their localities, two say it is sufficient except in haytime, two that is barely sufficient, and two say it is insufficient. Only two of these returns distinctly state that numbers of labourers are unemployed in winter, but this was put prominently forward by many labourers to whom I talked, and I have no doubt that a good many of the casual workers are idle for two or three months of the winter. These men admit that while employed they earn more than the regular men, and probably a couple thirty men who elect to work as a casual labourer may, during the year, earn as much or more than a regular man, but the casual employment, or the spells of idleness, do not tend to make men thrifty, and the men regularly employed appear to be the best off. Wherever there is bog, or a common however small, these casual labourers are to be found, often owing the cabins in which they live, as will be seen further on.

Degree of
supply.

17. That there has been a steady decrease in the supply of labour for the past few years is not only shown by the returns of employers, but it is demonstrated by the census returns, which exhibit a decrease in the wage-earners, including agricultural labourers (cottagers), male and female, shepherds, indoor farm servants (male and female), and general labourers of both sexes from 1,422 in 1881 to 1,298 in 1891, being a loss of 124 persons, or 8.7 per cent. during the decade.

The demand for labour has, however, decreased to some extent during the same period, as more and more of the land has been laid down, and tillage is as a whole less in this part of the country, being often done with an insufficient amount of labour.

No im-
migration.

18. There is no immigration here, nor is there much migration to England, but there is a steady stream of emigration of the young and active of both sexes. The people here do not go so generally to the United States as those of some other counties, many having gone to Buenos Ayres, where it is said they have been very successful.

19. As to efficiency, eleven returns out of fourteen say the men are not so efficient as formerly, the best being comprised. Mr. Gray, of Dorrington, a large employer and a gentleman of great experience, says, "Two men 30 years ago were as good as three now." Mr. Adamson, Assistant Land Commissioner, says, "Men here do not work so well as in Ulster, or as in England and Scotland," while Mr. Fox says, "There

"is a decrease in the supply, but an increase of efficiency," and one employer says, "Efficiency is much the same as formerly;" and another, that it is "about the same as in other districts."

THE
ADJUTANT-
GENERAL
LONDON.

It is clear, from the testimony of so many witnesses, that, on the whole, the efficiency of the labourer has decreased during the last 30 or 40 years, and this is probably what might be expected in a population suffering from emigration.

II.—CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

20. Employment is regular and continuous on some farms, on others chiefly casual.

On the residential places of the gentry, and on many of the large farms, a regular staff of men is employed all the year, and in the haytime a few more are taken on, examples of which have been given in paragraph 12. On medium-sized farms, one man is regularly employed,* and others casually as required, while on farms a little smaller it is customary to keep an indoor man.

21. Engagements of regular men are by the year, and they often stay for a long time on the same farm. A careful hand often spends his lifetime on a farm, and is succeeded by his son.

The casual labourer engages for a day, a week, or a longer time, according to the demand for his services, and the nature of the job.

22. The hours of work most commonly adopted are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with an hour and sometimes an hour and half for meals. Some have a shorter day, as Mr. Ross, P.L.G., who says from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner, are his hours, making a working day of 9½ hours.

Ten hours, ten and a half hours, and in some cases eleven hours are the working day in other parts of the Union, for ordinary labourers in summer. Women are rarely employed except on their own holdings.

On Sunday only herds and those in charge of herds are employed for about two hours.

Sunday
work.

III.—WAGES AND EARNING.

23. The current rate of wages for ordinary labourers in continuous employment is 7s. a week for four months and 8s. for the remaining time.

Wages of
casual
labourers.

A few employers give 9s. a week all the year, but it is unusual, while some go as low as 6s. in winter, and one large farmer reports 7s. a week round the whole year except two weeks of harvest, when he pays 12s.

The above are quotations from the returns of the employers, and agree closely with information supplied by labourers with whom I conversed in various parts of the Union.

At Deery, labourers on the farm, told me they got 8s. a week on the farm, and 9s. when in the wood. Pat Moran, an able young man, at Kilsard, told me he had 7s. a week for three months and 8s. for nine months. Matt Martin, an old man at the same place, said he got 6s. for three months and 7s. for nine months. This man lives in one of the board's cottages, for which, with half an acre of garden, he pays 12s. 6d. 8d., and he grows a root of potatoes on an adjoining farm, and feeds pigs and fowls, which he looks on as nearly as good as his wages.

John Ryan, at Ballymahon, told me he was getting 1s. a day and his food, but had been idle for two months in winter. John Hart told me he got 5s. and his food all the year, and as extra 1s. a week in haytime and harvest.

Locally, at Kildangan, 10s. is a day and his food for eight months, and 6d. and food for the remaining four months. John Keegan, an old man, has 8s. in summer and 6s. in winter. William Moran, Ballymahon, gets 9s. a week all the year, and his master coats his turf for him. William Courtney gets 8s. and his food for the four winter months and 1s. and his food for the remainder of the year. Joseph Eliff said he had worked for the same employer, wet and dry, for the past five years at 7s. a week.

Michael Donnelly, at Foxhall, told me a good many were unemployed there for two months in winter; that the wages for casual labourers there is 1s. a day and food, rising to 1s. 6d., 1s. 8d., and 1s. 10d. in haytime, 7s. to 9s. per Irish acre for mowing meadow, and 12s. to 14s. for harvesting, equal to 12s. 6d. and 13s. per statute acre.

Wages of
casual
labourers.

24. Piece-work is not general in this part of the country, but mowing of meadows and harvesting are

Piece-work.

* Appendix B. † Appendix A. ‡ Appendix B.

* Appendix A, column 5.

2.—XL
BALLY-
KARRON.

rent is 6d. a week in winter and 10d. in summer, according to li. 14. 6d. a year.

The second lot are more comfortable, being a storey and a half in height, and having belowstairs 6 kitchen 14 x 14 and a bedroom 14 x 12, and above, two bedrooms 14 x 10 and 12 x 10. There is also a small porch to most of them. For these cottages, with garden of half an acre, and offices, the rent is 6d. a week in winter and 1s. in summer, or li. 18s. 6d. a year.

These cottages are well distributed, and are undoubtedly a great boon to the labourers who have been so fortunate as to get into them, but there is much jealousy on the part of many other applicants who were refused, and a very large scheme of building would still be required to replace the existing cottages which are " unfit for human habitation."

YOUNG OF
CARRON.

27 The tenure of cottages in the Union varies greatly. Many are held directly from estate owners, with small farms, and sometimes with only a small garden attached.

The village of Ballymore is an example of the system of very small holdings. Owned by two proprietors, Mr. Croser Roberts and Mr. Salmon Black, the village extends for about a mile, and the cottages, most of which are detached, stand on small holdings varying from about an acre to about eight acres. William Moran holds a comfortable detached cottage with an acre and a half of land as li. 6s. 6d. a year, and James McGinley a similar cottage with about an acre as li. 9s. 6d. a year, while others hold about 7 acres as li. 6s. rent.

At Kildaregan I saw two very good cottages held from Colonel King-Barham as li. a year each. These cottages were built by the landlord, contain each four good rooms, and have about 2 acres of land attached to one and an acre and a half to the other.

Mr. Wakefield's labourers have little bog holdings at Cloonheen, varying from about half an acre to 3 acres, on which they have their cottages. The rents are from li. to 3l.

On the Foxhall property a number of labourers have built strong mud cabins on small bog holdings, for which they pay the small rent of 6s. for about an acre and a supply of turf. Others pay 1s. having larger plots.

Many cottages are held from the tenant farmers, sometimes on condition of working, or as part of wages, and sometimes by the week without any conditions. In the country districts a poor cottage lets for about 6d. a week, and sometimes is paid for by a day's labour, the labourer being fed, but some of the small cottages with only one or two apartments are 3s. as low as 6s. or 4s. a year, and for some no rent is charged. A moderately good two-roomed cottage, with a few perches of garden, lets for 1s. a week in the country districts, and for 1s. 3d., 1s. 6d., or even 2s. a week, if in Ballynashon, those held from the head landlord being lower rented than those held from middlemen or farmers.

Rents upon cottages under 4s. valuation are paid by the landlord, the county cess often by the tenant.

V.—GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS, &c.

GARDENS.

28. Many cottages here have no garden attached, and where there are gardens they are with a few exceptions of small size. At Newcastle, as already mentioned, the gardens measure from half an acre to three rods. At Mossfield and some other places the extent is about an Irish rod, or a rod and twenty-five perches estate, and every variety may be found down to one perch. Some of the gardens are well cultivated and clean, while many are worn out and foul. The crops generally planted are potatoes, cabbages, and cinders, fruit or flowers being rare.

The gardens attached to the cottages built under the Labourers' Acts are half a statute acre in extent, and generally are good fresh land, fully cropped, and presenting a pleasing contrast to the old holdings.

Many of the small agricultural holdings can only be regarded as gardens, but where they are over half an acre in extent, and the tenant has not been put in as a labourer, or for temporary convenience, he is entitled to have a four rod field under the Land Acts, for 15 years. I saw one holding of 3 rods and 8 perches Irish, equal to 3 rods and 12 perches statute, where the rent had been so fixed at 16s. a year, and there are

many other small holdings on which rents have been fixed, and in almost all cases reduced, either by the Land Court, or by statutory agreement between landlord and tenant.

There are no allotments in the Union.

29. Potato grounds are not generally given except for payment, the usual charge made being at the rate of 8s. per Irish acre, manured or 4s. unmanured, but drilled and cultivated. There are some cases in which the labourer has potato ground as a part of his bargain, but the system is not so general as in districts where tillage farming is more practised.

Cow pastures are almost always given to herds, and sometimes to other labourers as perquisites, or at a reduced price.

Where this is not the case, a labourer pays 3l. for the grazing of a cow for the summer half-year, and 1l. for the winter.

30. The live stock kept by labourers includes pigs, which are kept by the majority of them, fowls, which are almost universally kept, goats frequently and a cow occasionally. Bees are sometimes kept, but not so generally as they might be.

VI.—BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

31. Benefit Societies are quite unknown in the district, with the exception of a small perched society at Keenagh in connexion with the church, for some of the labourers.

VII.—TRADE UNIONS.

32. There are no trade unions.

VIII.—GENERAL RELATIONS.

33. The best relations are said to exist between the employers and the labourers, and no trouble has been expressed with herds similar to that referred to by Mr. Richards in his report on Loughrea, or Galway, but herds' organizations are said to exist in the adjoining county of Roscommon.

IX.—GENERAL COMMENTS.

34. The general condition of the agricultural labourer in this district cannot be considered satisfactory, for in two important respects it falls to come up to the average. The first of these is the want of steady and continuous employment, even at the moderate or low rate of wages which is customary here, and the second is, that, notwithstanding the improvements made by the Board of Guardians during the past few years, the majority of the labourers are still housed in very poor unsanitary cabins. Some of the employers who have favoured me with returns dwell upon the fact that the condition of the labourer, as regards his earnings, is better than formerly, but Mr. Cullen says, "The want of continuous employment sorely presses on the agricultural labourer, who in the winter suffers much privation," and Mr. Ross, chairman of the Board of Guardians, also says, "The general condition of the agricultural labourer is not satisfactory, owing to the slackness of winter employment," and Mr. Shearer remarks on this subject, "Many are out of employment in the winter quarter."

As to the condition of the cottages, it is perhaps needless to add to the array of facts presented in paragraph 25, or to comment upon them further than to say that they disclose a very melancholy state of affairs as regards the dwellings of the poorer class of labourers.

I may mention, in conclusion, that the amount of pauperism in the Union is less than might be expected, considering the low rate of wages, and the casual way in which the majority are employed. On the 20th of March 1892 there were 128 persons in the workhouse and 228 receiving outdoor relief, while on the 20th of September, the number in the house was 108, or about 0.7 per cent. of the population, and the number on outdoor relief 230, or about 1.3 per cent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) B. McQuinn,
(Assistant Commissioner).

THE
AGRICULTURAL
LABOURER.

Potato
grounds.

Cow pas-
tures.

Live stock.

APPENDIX A.
EVIDENCE FROM EVIDENCES IN HAZARDING UNITS.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. STATE OF LABOUR -	Mr. W. H. Owen, D.D. Valuation, 4441, 50, 60.	Mr. G. A. Adams, D.D. Aphrodisias—Aphrodisias	Mr. John Connel, Bristol—Bristol and Farmer.	Mr. Arthur Shaw, Valuation, 554.			
2. CONDITIONS OF LABOUR -	Supply rather scarce; decreased during recent years. No immigration. Very moderate. Very good in some 20 years ago. Good in others. About the same in other districts.	Supply sufficient. A domestic servant 10 years. There was a considerable number of the kind. Some had their houses reduced. (Migrants had trouble) this. No immigration. Men not so efficient as formerly. Do not work so well as in Ulster, or as in England and Scotland.	Supply sufficient. Domestic fully 50 per cent. in 14 years. No immigration. No one has been reduced as formerly. Some are having emigrated, but no one has been reduced with other districts.	Supply sufficient. Domestic fully 50 per cent. in 14 years. No immigration. No one has been reduced as formerly. Some are having emigrated, but no one has been reduced with other districts.	Employment casual and irregular. Employment generally by the week. Hours 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer; from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter. With 14 hours a day in winter. Actual hours labour, 10½ in summer, 6½ in winter.	Employment generally casual. Employment generally by the week. Hours 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer; from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter. With 14 hours a day in winter. Actual hours labour, 10½ in summer, 6½ in winter.	Employment generally casual. Employment generally by the week. Hours 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer; from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter. With 14 hours a day in winter. Actual hours labour, 10½ in summer, 6½ in winter.
3. WAGES AND EXPENSES -	Current rate of wages 4s. per week for three months in winter, and from 7s. 6d. to 8s. in summer. No piece-work. In harvest 2s. to 3s. 6d. per day. In haymaking 2s. to 3s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.	Current rate of wages 4s. a day and food. Casual, not labourers to do piece-work. In haymaking 2s. 6d. per day. In harvest 2s. 6d. per day. In corn, and 2s. 6d. per year. No piece-work. Ordinary labourers 18s. to 24s.; shepherds 35s. to 45s.

HARVEST FROM EARLHOTTEN IN BULLEWATON UNION—continued.

	1. Mr. W. H. Grey, J.P. Valuation, 1906, 1s. 0d.	2. Mr. G. A. G. Adamsen, J.P. Akers—Arbore Union	3. Mr. W. Murray. Valuation, 1906.	4. Mr. John Gordon, School Teacher and Farmer.	5. Mr. Arthur Ham, Valuation, 1906.
6. BUCKINGHAM	There are no lands suitable in this district.	Not known in rural districts.	None	Not visited of	None
7. TOWN UNION	None in this district.	None	None	None	None
8. CHURCHILL PARISH	Very good		Fairly	Good	Indigest very good.
9. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER	The general condition of the agricultural labourer is very comfortable. They feel well, dress well, and are healthy. The women and young men, both of whom spend for much on their dress.	In this district I look on the lot of the labourer as being far better than in some, where everything has to be paid for in cash. Fuel costs little. If he is able to scrape up a little money he can get potatoes ground so that it is free for the use of sheep. If not, he can get land enough ready sown for sheep, which will succeed for about 11, which will keep his family supplied with potatoes for the year and food for pig or two as well as food for the little labourer and the young man to keep at work on the day with, provided they are not allowed to be idle. With the money they have they can have some more of the work from many of those by bringing in ready-made English goods. English should have paid for all their savings.	Much improved	The work of continuous employment nearly prevails on the agricultural labourer, who, in this district, and in some previous years, has at least 100 days of the agricultural work, and another about 4 per cent. of the population in this district.	

	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
	Mr. A. J. Fox. Valence, 377, 106. 6d.	Mr. J. Ross, F.L.G. 158, 174. 0d.	Mr. Skerrett, Barrow to Mr. Y. Rother, J.P.	Mr. W. Matthews, P.L.G.	Mr. J. S. Higgs, Lead Valley.
1. DEMAND OF LABOUR.	Supply not sufficient. There is a decrease in the supply, but not to the extent of deficiency.	There is a full supply of labour in summer. Summer get no employment in winter. No transference of labour from one industry to another as formerly.	There is a sufficient supply of labour. There is a decrease seasonally going on. No transference of labour from one industry to another as formerly.	The supply of labour is insufficient in my neighbourhood. There is a great decrease. There is no transference. Men are not so efficient as they were in former times.	The supply of labour is sufficient for the present requirements. There has been a decrease of 25 per cent. The efficiency was formerly better than at present. It is nearly the same as in other districts.
2. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.	Employment is regular. Engagement is generally by the week. The hours of work are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter. It is the depth of winter, with no heat for dinner.	Employment usual. Hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter, with half an hour for breakfast in summer, and an hour for dinner in winter. No Sunday work.	Employment regular. Engagement by the week. Hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter, with an hour for dinner. Hours of labour, 11 in summer.	One man regularly employed; others occasionally required. Hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with half an hour for breakfast in summer, and an hour for dinner in winter. No transference of labour from one industry to another as formerly. It rains, with no heat for dinner.	Chiefly employed by the year. Hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter, with an hour for dinner. No Sunday work, except by rubber servants.
3. WAGES AND RENTALS.	The current rate of wages is from 7s. to 10s. weekly. 20 piece-work. In laymen and bar-men, from 10s. to 12s. a week. No piecework. Battered annual earnings, — In laymen and bar-men, 10s. to 12s. a week. In the charge of horses and carts, 2s.	Current wages from 5s. down to 7s. a week. Piece work: setting madders 4s. in a week, cutting oats, binding, and so on, 10s. to 12s. a week. Sole — This is equal to about 15s. to 16s. per acre in corn.	Current wages on this farm, 6s. a week all the year round. Rates men in bygone, 10s. per week. Annual earnings, 10s. 4s.	Wages 10s. per week, and food for three months. 10s. and food for three months. Year ending in highly paid. There is a rise of wages in bygone. Estimated earnings, 10s.	Wages vary from 10s. to 12s. 6d. a day. Estimated annual earnings, — Ordinary labourers, 10s. Horse, five horses and 200
4. CONDITIONS OF HOUSING.	The supply of cottages is better than in the past. They are generally within a quarter of a mile of work, being disposed on farms. Some are unsatisfactory, and some are new.	The supply of cottages is better than in the past. They are generally within a quarter of a mile of work, being disposed on farms. Some are unsatisfactory, and some are new.	There is one cottage on this farm for the whole house. It is within 1/2 mile. The other is a garden cottage for which the tenant pays 6d. a week. He has no excellent garden of half an acre.	There is a sufficient supply of cottages in my neighbourhood. They are disposed on farms. The Union cottages are good, others are poor. The cost of the Union cottages is 10s. a year. Others pay from 15s. 10s. to 20s.	There are seven cottages in the parish. They are generally disposed on farms. Some are unsatisfactory, and some are new. Some are two or three apartments, and others are one or two. The labourers generally build from house to house, as in this electoral division there is no resident landlord giving employment.

RETURN from EMPLOYERS in RUGGARDHUR Unions—continued.

	11. Mr. A. G. Kingston, J.P. 1851 to 1861	12. Mr. J. Bond, J.P. 1861 to 1871	13. Mr. J. Kerry. 1871 to 1881	14. Mr. E. Wicksell 1881 to 1891
5. GARDENS, ALLEGEDLY, &c.	Gardens from a road to half an acre, Irish, are attached to cottages here. The cultivation is confined to potatoes and cabbages, and some years oats. There are no allotments (as defined by the Act of 1891). The five shank kept—a cow, sometimes a calf for a year, a pig, or two, and fowls. Some have an acre. Some keep less.	-	Gardens are about a rood, Irish, given with the five shank kept—grain and poultry. No less than.	Hedges are from half an acre to three acres. Potatoes and oats are the principal crops. Pigs, cows, and geese are kept. When a labourer having no land takes a garden for a cow he pays 2s. for the season, six months and 1s. for the winter.
6 & 7. HIGHER SOCIETIES AND TRADE UNIONS.	There is a small provident society in connection with the church, for some of the labourers. It is not registered. There are no trade unions of labourers.	-	-	I am not aware of any benefit societies or trade unions.
8. GENERAL RELATIONS.	-	Good	The best relations exist between the labourers and the employers.	Very good.
9. GENERAL CONDITION.	-	Good	The labourers might be better off if they would keep pigs, and be more thrifty.	The general condition of the labourer is greatly superior to what it was 20 years ago.

APPENDIX B.

ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN FOUR ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Electoral Division and County.	Under 5L.	5L.-10L.	10L.-20L.	20L.-50L.	50L.-100L.	Above 100L.	Total No.
Cashel West, co. Longford	209	56	126	35	4	—	425
Doory, co. Longford	54	35	50	28	9	7	186
Ardsnagagh, co. Westmeath	53	27	36	16	7	5	144
Winstown, co. Westmeath	22	9	19	14	9	6	79
	348	177	231	97	39	18	897

PER-CENTAGE OF TOTAL in each CLASS.

Electoral Division.	Under 5L.	5L.-10L.	10L.-20L.	20L.-50L.	50L.-100L.	Above 100L.
Cashel West	44.85	20.24	27.12	7.41	0.83	—
Doory	28.92	17.37	20.76	14.16	4.55	3.54
Ardsnagagh	35.41	18.90	20.27	10.83	4.79	3.25
Winstown	27.63	11.25	24.05	17.72	11.25	7.50
Average of four divisions	38.30	19.75	25.42	10.51	5.23	2.01

APPENDIX C.

POPULATION, AREA, and VALUATION of the ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Electoral Division and County.	Popu- lation, 1881.	Popu- lation, 1891.	Area.	Valuation.	Valua- tion per Acree.
Aghaura, co. Longford	843	774	4,582 2 19	3,225 15 0	7.04
Ballynashen	2,538	3,164	5,083 2 13	7,225 12 0	14.10
Cashel, East	708	685	7,227 0 28	1,789 17 0	2.46
Cashel, West	1,825	1,625	9,267 2 32	4,230 9 0	4.56
Doory	303	684	6,277 3 25	3,874 8 0	6.18
Fogarty	1,441	963	6,741 0 32	4,721 5 0	7.00
Foodall	754	670	4,628 0 28	2,524 2 6	5.45
Kilcomanagh	1,800	1,614	7,823 2 24	4,246 14 0	5.43
Kilgus	1,794	1,419	8,287 0 1	6,026 10 6	7.27
Lodwickstown	305	464	6,728 1 8	2,047 5 6	3.04
Ardsnagagh co. Westmeath	525	462	3,874 2 10	2,227 7 0	5.75
Ballyvaughan	1,633	379	5,355 2 26	3,255 5 0	6.08
Dacina	620	517	3,684 3 20	2,252 13 0	6.11
Dromore	458	447	3,205 1 24	2,426 9 0	7.57
Donaghadee	568	489	4,004 1 25	3,212 15 0	8.02
Flaxton	289	326	5,245 0 19	5,006 5 6	9.54
Templepatrick	397	521	5,724 8 36	5,529 2 6	9.68
Winstown	374	319	5,480 0 25	2,226 0 0	4.06

APPENDIX D.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CENSUS RETURNS.

B-XL
TABLE
MARKS.

Occupation.	No. in 1881.	No. in 1891.	Increase.	Decrease.
Farmer, master, male - - - - -	1,761	1,572	—	188
Do. do. female - - - - -	269	226	—	53
Farmers, grandson, son, grandson, brother, nephew - - - - -	604	667	263	—
Farm book-keeper - - - - -	—	8	8	—
Agricultural labourer (cottager) - - - - -	882	991	—	991
Do. do. female - - - - -	32	19	—	13
Shepherd, male and female - - - - -	78	46	—	32
Farm servant, indoor, male - - - - -	126	176	50	—
Do. do. female - - - - -	91	97	6	—
General labourer, male - - - - -	316	329	8	—
Do. do. female - - - - -	29	5	—	24

